MORALS FOR MINISTERS

The MC Co.

MORALS *for* MINISTERS

BY R. E. X.

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MORALS FOR MINISTERS

THE TRUTH

THE preacher is under patent and sacred obligation to speak the truth, yet there are few places where it is more difficult to do so than in the pulpit, and that for several reasons.

Nowadays the convictions of a preacher often differ from his Church's official creed, to which, on entering the ministry, he may have been required to give personal subscription. A simple solution of his difficulty, and one generally commended to him by his more orthodox brethren, is that he should resign a ministry whose conditions he no longer fulfils. For some men this might be the honest course, but probably for few. Those who consider their points of difference unimportant will rightly argue that a vital connection should not be severed for the sake of formal or petty incongruity. And the man who differs from his Church's beliefs on a matter which seems to him important

can hardly regard his Church's attitude on this point as anything but an obscuration of its message and a hindrance of its work. Hence, in proportion to his devotion to his Church, he will maintain his position in it, hoping thus to help it to repudiate old accretions that have now become harmful. The position of such men is not easy. The strong and clear thinker, if he is honest, will utter his convictions in the pulpit, and will find himself abused and misrepresented and called traitor to his Church and the receiver of emoluments under false pretences, but he may suffer no further harm. The risk he huns is not so much that of being expelled from the ministry of his Church as of being denied the possibility of making a living in it, which to a man with dependents and without other resources becomes the hard choice between disloyalty to a disputed truth and an uncalendared martyrdom whose miseries he cannot confine to himself. In this case he will share with the diffident thinker the temptation to call doubt pride, to force himself to think as his Church thinks, or to tell himself that it is better to be allowed to teach most of the truth than to be silenced for insisting upon the whole of it.

There is another side to this difficulty. The

demand of the worshipper that the pulpit of his Church shall accord with its explicit and official creed may not be nonsuited. Though sometimes captious, this demand often tells of a real need, which no spiritually sensitive preacher will treat lightly. He must convince his hearers that when he differs from the official creed, he does so not wantonly but under compulsion of loyalty to truth, and that he is made humble rather than combative by their pain. But here too there is temptation, for the desire to be in accord with these honest people may become a powerful reinforcement of less worthy motives which press the preacher to accommodate his convictions to the pronouncements of antiquity. He is thus under constant temptation to avoid any utterance which would lessen his popularity with any important section of his congregation; and he may justify the selectiveness of his loyalty by regarding his popularity as the seal of God upon his ministry.

The extent to which such influence can warp the mind is wonderful and pitiful. I have heard a popular and respected preacher take one of the last twelve verses of the Second Gospel as his text and state explicitly, "This is Mark's account of the resurrection." Now almost the

first thing a theological student learns is that these twelve verses are not part of the original Gospel of St. Mark. Did the preacher not know this? It is difficult to think that any Christian preacher could be ignorant of so elementary a fact concerning one of the most important documents of his gospel. Yet I cannot think that it was in this preacher's mind at all, or he could not have spoken so. It is charitable and probably correct to conclude that years of preaching influenced by the desire to avoid anything unsettling to his hearers had produced a complete oblivion to a large range of religiously important facts.

Similar influences with similar results may be found in the case of many evangelists. By certain well recognized methods a hallfull of people may be so wrought upon that many individuals amongst them will commit themselves to momentous acceptances and decisions upon representations and appeals that would have been quite barren of such results had they been proffered without the presence of an excited crowd. We need not stay now to discuss the morality of this proceeding: it is only necessary here to remark that these effects are producible in proportion as the individuals of the crowd accept without question the grounds

upon which the appeal is made. And since an effective appeal is commonly regarded as having the sanction of the Holy Spirit, there is a tendency to regard what is most commonly thought as what God thinks. And since the endeavour to think independently inhibits the power of crowd emotion, there is a tendency to suspect any open-eyed search for truth as inimical to the Gospel of God. It is therefore clear that men who are occupied in this work and use these methods must not be expected to be lovers of the truth unless they are of very limited intelligence.

But the considerations just noted are by no means confined to evangelists. Every man who stands before an audience is tempted to exploit the possibilities of crowd-psychology; and this will strain his loyalty to truth in several ways. A crowd is stirred much more effectively by strong contrasts, sweeping and emphatic assertions, vituperation and hero-worship, than by a just estimate of fact and person. Hence the frequent and disgusting exaggerations of the pulpit. Crowds delight in unsparing condemnation of those who differ from them: this does not help the preacher to balanced judgment. Crowds are moved more by suggestion than by argument: a statement pas-

sionately roared at them is likely to be more effective than "sweet reasonableness." "Force," says Hazlitt, "is the sole characteristic excellence of an orator." Hence the preacher is tempted to appear very much surer about his utterances than he really is.

An important factor in this bias to untruth is that the emotions of the crowd tend to infect the preacher, and emotion loves to exaggerate; especially is this so with anger and admiration, two of the commonest pulpit emotions.

It is thus commonly true that when a speaker is most emphatic, when he shouts loudest and uses most adjectives, he is trying to put upon his audience by suggestion what he knows his proofs are too weak to carry.

And it is interesting and hopeful to mark that as the last few decades have pursued the attempt to understand the history of the first and greatest Preacher of the Gospel of God, the congregations of the Church show less desire for rolling periods and impassioned declamation.

WRONG MOTIVE

A DANGER of the Christian ministry is the likelihood that a man may undertake it from wrong motives; and, if he does, the result is more disastrous than in other callings.

Some men, it is said, become ministers of religion because they think it an easy way to earn a living. Probably it is so for men with outstanding elocutionary or rhetorical gifts, but the drawback is that if these gifts are to earn an easy livelihood in the Christian ministry, they must for ever appear to be fired by a lofty devotion, while they are really being used in the service of quite other considerations. Unfortunately the orator, when the fit is on, can only too easily blaze with emotion about interests very different from those for which he lives: he can even congratulate himself upon possessing a virtue because he can grow eloquent about it.

What more often happens is that a youth who shows some talent is flattered and fluttered into the ministry by the pious and undiscrim-

inating admiration of aunts and suchlike. He chooses his calling before he has taken account of himself, and the desire to be of use in the world readily plays into the hands of the desire for distinction and glory, which is very often strong in men of ability. The chief, if only half conscious, motive for which a man undertakes the ministry may thus be vainglory, and he may easily persuade himself that he loves distinction because it contributes to his influence for good.

If a man undertakes such a work from such a motive, the result is bound to be bad. Perhaps the commonest outcome is that in course of time he finds that the world will not think as much of him as he thinks of himself, and he grows embittered, and often mistakes the bitterness of his disappointed vanity for a holy indignation at the world's blindness and meanness.

Or it may happen that after some years experience brings wisdom enough for him to recognize that he is no genius, that his early dreams of an applauding world are never likely to be fulfilled, and that the world is more than half right. Unfortunately, in some cases, it seems that by the time this discovery is made, all the emotional elements proper to the minis-

try have been accustomed to actuate only in the service of the master-motive, vanity, and when vanity at length resigns its premiership its cabinet resigns with it, and the man's life becomes empty of all incentive. He is appalled to find that he, who has so often urged the interest and importance and greatness of life, has himself nothing to live for. The situation may react disastrously upon his family life. His betrothal is often closely associated with the feminine admiration that ushers him into the ministry, and his marriage generally takes place early in his first ministerial charge, while the praise that always surrounds the early months of a new ministry still supports his dream of greatness. He probably chooses his wife, so far as his choice determines the matter, partly because of her discernment of his abilities (which is really her choice of him) and partly because she promises to make an efficient minister's wife. Now, when a man and woman share the desire to serve the same great end by the same means, it makes for the dignity and happiness of their love; and probably the homes of ministers have a very high proportion of the truest wedded comradeship. But when the sex instinct actuates in a man who is moved mainly by a dream of self-glory, a time inevi-

tably comes when fellowship turns to bondage. After a few years the dreamer wakes and sees his wife with her first beauty spent in their joint endeavour, and he wonders why he married her. He finds his heart to let just when the dominating purpose of his life fails him. And since Mrs. Grundy and something to live for are the two powers that keep man monogamous, his position is both perilous and pitiful.

Not infrequently, the man who is moved to the ministry by love of glory and is disappointed, will develop love of power. He will emphasize the dignity and exploit the influence of his position. He may seek public office and enjoy the powers accruing to it, especially if they involve the refusal or acceptance of candidates for employment, as in the case of educational boards, to which the clerical mind gravitates. He who is inwardly and secretly sore because the world has not given him his desire may feel pleasure in being the instrument of providence in keeping the unworthy from attainment.

It seems only too possible that a minister whose master-motive is vanity may continue his work for years without coming into collision with the truth. Especially is this so if he succeeds in achieving popularity or in produc-

ing the commonly accepted signs of ministerial success. The possibility is appalling—to be permanently blind to the incompatibility of vainglory with the cross of Christ. And in so far as his blindness is not complete, he will be conscious or half conscious that his vanity is compelling him to perpetual grimace, to a recurrent debauch of life's sanctities, and to the purchase of attention at the price of his soul's dignity.

MIXED MOTIVES

We have been told within these last few years that we must change our ideas about our motives. We used, so it is said, to think that we were quiescent until our conscious self adopted motives, which then led to action, as when a man feels the desirability of a certain book, asks himself whether he can afford it, decides he can, and then goes and buys it.

Now we are told that instincts of which we are largely unconscious are the real driving powers that bring our actions to pass, and that our conscious motives are only the mental fabrications by which our conscious self persuades itself to consent to an act of whose real motive it may be quite ignorant. You really decide to buy that book because you are unconsciously in love with the girl in the book-shop.

But men were never quite such simpletons about their motives as the psychoanalyst seems to think they were, and his new view of them is not quite so new or quite so true as it is given out to be.

Men have always known of driving forces in life that did not originate in conscious deliberation. They have known that the motives which a man gives to himself for his actions are not always the true ones, and that therefore a man may be partly or wholly self-deceived as to his motives. Everybody knows that in nine cases out of ten a man does not decide on the advantages of getting married and then begin to look out for a wife: he first falls in love and then propounds to himself the benefits of marriage. In the works of any writer who knows human nature may be found instances of men and women more or less unconscious of the motive powers that are really moving them and giving themselves reasons for their conduct which are at widest variance from the truth. Shakespeare is full of them: an element of it is apparent in the heroes of nearly all his great tragedies and in many others of his more complex characters. Hazlitt had a keen eye for these tricks even in his friends: of Coleridge he wrote: "What he calls sympathizing with others is their admiring him."

And it seems to me that the now popular psychological account of instincts and motives ignores certain facts. The instincts are no doubt the ultimate driving force of our activity and

they are always pressing for outlet in act. It is true also that our conscious motives for an act are often other than the instincts that are its ultimate driving force. But it by no means follows that because of this discrepancy our conscious motives are misleading, useless, or worse than useless. If conscious motives are reliable only when they exactly represent the instincts in their otherwise unconscious state, what is the use of consciousness at all? The instincts would get on as well without it.

There are cases in which conscious motive obviously captures and uses the instinctive apparatus. When Cæsar smilingly ate the ointment, he consciously compelled himself to do that for which he had an instinctive repugnance. We may say, "It was a case of one instinct making use of another"; but that is just the point, for one instinct cannot usually, if ever, make use of another without the intervention of a conscious motive.

Modern psychology with one voice emphasizes the supreme importance of bringing our various instincts into harmony with each other. But this can be done only through conscious motive, and only if conscious motive is not merely a representation of the instinctive tendencies at work, and also only if it has some

power of controlling and modifying instinct. When conscious motive is functioning healthily, it is the endeavour to bring our conflicting instincts into harmony by securing that action shall be in the interest of our life as a whole; when it is functioning deceitfully it is seeking reasons by which we may persuade ourselves that it is for our general good to do that to which some instinct is blindly thrusting us. Often it is a mixture of both these.

We see thus that motives are always mixed and must be so. The conscious motive cannot and ought not to be the same as the undercurrent of instinct; it is this that gives richness and vitality to both thought and action: it is the mental counterpart of the economic division of labour. The bootmaker wants to make me a pair of boots: I suspect that his reason for wanting to make them is not the same as mine for wanting them made; but that does not mean that I am duped when I give him the order. Without such a concurrence of different motives life economically would remain poverty-stricken and rudimentary. The same is true of our inward life: its wealth is wealth of motive. There is always the underlying instinct, generally quite animalish, and there is always a conscious view of this as a part of life as a whole,

a view which includes and therefore to some extent stimulates all other instincts and interests that may be furthered or prejudiced by the contemplated course of action. There is generally also a constructive idea as to what is desirable for life as a whole, and this may and ought to take the form of the ideal of a life devoted to the highest. It is unavoidable and right that these elements, both instinctive and ideal, should be there, but it is absolutely important that the latter should dominate.

Consider the business of eating. We used to be asked whether we ate to live or lived to eat, and supposed ourselves to aspire to the former. But every healthy and good man does both, though not in the same proportion. The saint who does not enjoy his food is an unhealthy saint, and the man who enjoys his food and does not reckon the enjoyment of it as one of the elements of life's good has cooked his moral calculus. But the man who eats too much commits a beastly sin, in which even the beasts put him to shame, for they generally know when to stop.

Thus in almost every act of life two or more main motives and a host of minor ones are involved, and this is natural and right, so that we have no need to be ashamed when we find

ourselves acting from mixed motives, or to be scared by the psychologist's statement that we may be in part at least actuated by motives of which we are not conscious. The important thing is that of all the motives at work we should recognize that which has the right to dominate because it represents our most inclusive estimate of life's true interests, and should exert our minds to the utmost to secure its dominance; while the habit of considering as honestly as we can all the interests likely to be affected by the contemplated act, will not usually leave any really important motive unrecognized.

A practical point in these considerations, and one specially applicable to ministers, arises from the common necessity of committing ourselves to more than one act at a time. We commit ourselves to situations, positions, trains of activity: what we do, we mostly in the doing commit ourselves to doing again and again. But since many motives are involved in every act, it follows that, as the activity proceeds or repeats itself, the dominant motive may change, and is very likely to do so unless special means are taken to prevent it. We remember how the war motive changed as the war proceeded. We may undertake an activity from the best mo-

tives and shortly find ourselves carrying it on by inferior ones. This danger is one against which the minster especially must guard himself.

KEEPING ALIVE

SOME simple people think that ministers are generally better than other men: people outside the Church think that the minister believes himself to be better than other men: people inside the Church think that the minister ought to be better than other men. They all agree in the severity with which they condemn the minister for that which they easily condone in others and in censuring him for having too little of virtues and graces which they themselves are making no attempt to exercise.

To all ministers this seems stupidly unjust. It must seem so to any minister who has a little modesty and self-knowledge, while he who thinks highly of himself will feel it to be unfair that his personal attainment should lose much of its meed of merit by the exaggerated standard which popular opinion applies to him and his fellows.

This difference of view suggests the need of further elucidation. And it will appear that the minister's position in the matter is peculiar

and interesting. The strength of public opinion holds him more firmly to the regard of certain moral laws than it does other men, and therefore, in certain respects, it is not so easy for him to transgress. This prohibitory pressure extends not only to the current popular selection of the decalogue but even to certain minor extravagances and indulgences. The nature of the minister's work exerts a similar pressure: conduct is his business, and he is held to good conduct by all that holds the business man to good business methods.

But in one very important respect it is harder for him to be good than for others. Much upon which many other men rely to help them in the struggle against evil is likely to lose its power with the minister just because it is his business, familiar and obligatory. It is tragically and comically easy for a preacher to be angered by interruption when he is preparing a sermon on patience: to feel proud of a sermon on humility: to despair of a sermon on hope. He, of all men, will know that there is truth in the story of "Damn it, woman—I'm saying my prayers," and will feel inclined rather to commiserate the complexity than to censure the profanity of the soul that so uttered itself; for when the spirit is gone, we cling to the form

with a pathetic tenacity. Precisely because he must minister regularly to others, it is all the more difficult for him to minister to himself. He must preach and pray, whatever he feels, and a real concern for his hearers forbids him to let his preaching and praying reflect certain states of mind and hearts that are common experiences to all men. Therefore the means of grace tend to become the instruments of his work rather than the food of his soul. His place and work thus hold him firmly to the form of goodness, but make it very difficult for him to keep its spirit alive.

Hence it often comes that the shepherd is himself so underfed that he cannot feed his flock. Hence it is that so much of the noise of our pulpits, so much of their exaggeration and cocksureness, is the preacher's unconscious attempt to compensate for inward blank and diffidence.

Remedies are easier to prescribe than to use, for most of them are partly, if not wholly, negated by the very conditions that make them needful. The layman finds inspiration in the Bible: the minister often cannot see the Bible for texts. He is too accustomed to use upon others the sword of the word that should pierce his own spirit. He is so familiar with the Bible that its words make little impression

upon him, and new gleams are too rare not to be captured immediately for sermons.

Books of devotion are sometimes helpful, but good books of this sort are few, and they, too, suffer from familiarity and are only too apt to fail us just when our need is greatest.

Preaching has its place in the Christian Church because it gives something that reading cannot give, and this something the minister misses, for he can seldom know the arousal of listening to the spoken word. It would be a great boon if preaching services were held at times and places convenient for ministers to attend as hearers.

Sufficient time must be taken for meditation and prayer. But so often prayer fails to kindle the soul. Sometimes we find it hard to pray with more than words. Sometimes we think that the urgency of our prayers is the earnest of their answer; but it proves otherwise: the beggar is not filled by his cries. We may exhort ourselves that faith will give us the life we need: we tell ourselves that, having asked, we must believe we possess; yet we know we do not: it is the same old shabby, starved life; and in our hearts we know that we do no good by trying to think otherwise.

Prayer generally is and always ought to be

desire, but not merely desire, not even desire appropriately trimmed and addressed to God. The prayer that is not worship is no prayer: it is only incantation. And when we worship, wonder at Him to whom we pray transcends and transforms our petition. There is no true worship without wonder and no true life without worship. Spiritual wonder is thus the avenue of spiritual life, the root of all sound moral growth, the one thing that can save us from self-righteousness. And let him who would know this life-giving wonder stand before the cross of Christ. No man can contemplate that life and death unmoved. Habit kills wonder elsewhere: no man becomes habituated to the cross of Christ: it finds and strikes itself into the living centre of our souls, and at its presence the hardest habit is disturbed with quakings of life. And the wonder to which Jesus moves us is a wonder that works: it humiliates, inspires, kindles us. Nor must it be forgotten that our faith is heathen when it expects God to do for us that which cannot be done unless Christ does it in us.

There is thus a sense in which a minister ought to be a better man than others, for the alternatives of spiritual life or death come upon him more obviously. His position makes it

clearer to him than to others that the soul's life can be maintained only by frequent resort to that which is central and vital in his religion, to that near to which he must live if he would maintain in himself the worship which he leads for others, but which no man can live near without its exercising upon him a progressive transformation.

URGENCY IN PREACHING

We are told that the preacher's passion for souls is waning. Many a minister reproaches himself that his preaching has not the urgency of an older generation. But he may be condemning himself unfairly.

He is aware that the decline in the urgency of preaching is connected with the disuse of the appeal to fear. The preacher of a past day was convinced that his hearers would inevitably be condemned to unending torment unless they accepted the message of salvation which it was his vocation to proffer. With such a belief no man of any humane feeling could be anything but urgent. The wonder is that preachers of that day were not more urgent, and that any one who believed what they believed could refrain from preaching. Who will not shout with all his might to warn a man from danger that may break his neck?

"But," says the preacher of to-day, "if they were so urgent with a wrong idea of God, ought not a right idea to make me more urgent still?"

Ultimately, of course, this result should follow, but in the meantime certain considerations may be pondered, not by way of excuse, but because they are likely to be overlooked and because they afford an encouragement which we can ill spare. It is a Christian belief (shared by many who would hesitate to call themselves Christian) that the highest ideal will be best able to enlist the whole-hearted loyalty of man: unless this proves in the long run true, there is little hope for humanity. This belief obviously implies that the nearer a man gets to realizing the highest ideal the stronger will be its appeal to him. But we do not allow sufficiently for the corollary that, this being so, it must be expected that in immature stages of development ideals other than the highest will have the stronger appeal. It must not surprise us therefore if, in our present imperfect stage of spiritual growth, the truer idea of God will seem to us the less urgent.

Those who preached with the older urgency were moved chiefly by the desire to save their fellows from infinite pain. So terrific was the doom that there was no doubt about the rightness of being swayed by fear of it. But when once the hopelessness and utter misery of hell is doubted, when once we begin to think of

God's punishments as for our good, or as just, according to our only standard of justice, then fear of punishment as a motive loses its dignity. Whatever urgency may come from a forecast of the painful results of sin, it is generally now felt that the desire to help people to escape these results ought not to be the chief motive of preaching. So that over against his predecessors' desire to save souls from hell the modern preacher's main motive must be the desire that souls should come to the fullness of life. But it is very much easier for our mediocre goodness to be urgent about the first than about the second. It takes a purer goodness to desire the excellence of others than to desire their escape from pain. For every hundred who will exert themselves heroically to save a child from fire, hardly one will take the trouble to help him to the height of his possibilities. This has two reasons. Imagination and sympathy are moved far more strongly by the threat of pain to others than by the prospect of their growth in ability or virtue. This is probably because we hate our own pain more than we love our own virtues, except so far as we love them because they are ours. We no doubt hate our pains because they are ours, but not in the same way: the pains of others do

not affect our self-glory as do their excellences. The memory that we have suffered usually makes us more kindly to sufferers: the memory of our own righteousness usually makes us sceptical towards that of others. It is therefore far easier to be moved to help a man escape a hell from which we have been saved than to enjoy the prospect of his rivalling us in sanctity.

Another factor is at work here. One of the commonest of daydreams is to see ourselves achieving the glory of a rescue: it is so satisfactory to the sense of our own superiority, so confirmatory of our faith in our own amiableness. The desire to fulfil this dream may easily become no small part of a preacher's motive, especially if he thinks of his work as the rescue of souls from the path to hell. It is not likely to be active in the preacher who conceives his work to be the assistance of all souls into the likeness of One before whom he is humbled.

The lack of urgency which the modern preacher feels when he compares himself with his predecessors is thus by no means necessarily a symptom of spiritual decline. It may be because, being neither better nor worse than they, he has come to a fairer conception of God.

But still the challenge remains—a better understanding of God ought to set a man on the way to greater urgency. How may he grow to a depth of feeling that shall fit the height of his thought?

Probably, owing to reaction, modern preaching makes too little of the results of sin in pain and desolation and degradation not only to the sinner but to his fellows. There is no need to overstress the fear of consequence as a motive, but in many cases it is the consequence that shows most convincingly the hatefulness of wrong-doing. This, however, can at most be only one element, and it must be remembered that, in assessing results, pain and sorrow are apt to claim the bulk of our attention, though Christianity must resign to Buddhism if there is no greater evil than pain and sorrow.

A wholesome urgency in preaching can be had only by contemplating the urgency of Jesus until our sympathy with Him teaches us to love and desire the goodness of others as He did, and at length to know some fellowship with the sorrow that in Gethsemane measured the distance between what He made possible to men and what He saw them choose to be.

But there is another aspect of this matter that must be considered. In so far as escape

from hell and entrance to heaven were the supreme boons offered by the older preaching, the value of its offer could not be tested in this life. It is different now, and rightly, for it is an unspiritual scheme that promises us the highest in the future world without giving us the highest of which the present is capable. The chief offer of the preacher to-day is not a bliss that his hearers may one day enter, but a good that they may enjoy here and now. Of course, all Christian preaching has always to some extent contained both, but the change of emphasis is important. For it brings a direct question to the preacher. The starveling may prophesy that future years will bring plenty and has as good a chance of belief as any, but he who says, "There is plenty for all, here and now," must not look underfed. A preacher to-day carries little conviction of his Gospel unless he offers his hearers a good which he himself has; and it is well for him to ask himself, "What have I in present possession that is worth an urgency of impartation?"

The question demands careful answering, or it may lead a man astray. For the first suggestion probably will be that, since a test of the possession of truth lies in conduct, the preacher ought to appear as a man whose possession of

the truth makes him a better man than those who are without it. And it is dangerously easy to persuade himself that he fulfils this condition. In such a comparison facts afford no basis for judgment, for as far as the men are concerned with whom he compares himself, the relevance of the facts he knows depends upon other facts which he cannot know. He has only to let his native vanity go its own way and the desired result of thinking himself better than others will follow with the pleasant ease of all downhill motion. Nor is there much promise in the effort so to live as to be an obvious example to our fellows; for, as has often been said, what is worth doing as an example is better worth doing and can be better done for its own sake. And, in any case, the attempt to set an example commends not the Gospel but the Law.

It seems that the present good which the preacher offers his hearers is the enjoyment of God's goodness as known in Jesus Christ. Unless the goodness of God in Jesus Christ is to him a perpetual or recurrent joy and renewal, an abiding rebuke and encouragement, an unfailing dynamic and particularly a supersession of his self-glory, he has no experience to commend his offer. It is the experience of these things, which he may have whenever he will,

that gives validity and substance to his message, and ultimately his own appreciation of them will be the measure of the urgency with which he preaches his Gospel.

OPTIMISM AND PESSIMISM

Most ministers may be called either optimists or pessimists. The latter might object to the term, and we should have to compromise and call them positive non-optimists. But whatever the titles adopted, most ministers value themselves the more for being in the one class or the other, the optimist considering that he embodies the Christian hope, and the other congratulating himself upon his loyalty to fact and upon his renunciation of all fools' paradises.

It is sometimes taken for granted that a man who is a Christian must be an optimist, but this assumption is in one sense a truism and in another an untruth. If by an optimist we mean one who believes in the goodness of God, then to say that a Christian ought to be an optimist is to say that fire ought to be hot. But if optimism is to have any distinct meaning for us, we must distinguish it from faith—which affirms what, despite all appearances, *is*—and we must regard the former as a pronouncement

upon what will be: a pronouncement that claims to take account of, if not to base itself upon, our observation of humanity. The Christian (unless he is a Calvinist) believes that God wills the good of all, but this is faith, not optimism in the stricter sense. Within this faith, the difference between optimism and pessimism turns upon an estimate of the extent to which the response of humanity will make possible the achievement of God's will, that is, it turns upon a factor that is not included in faith's affirmation that God is good.

If a man believes that in the end all souls will find their fullness in God, this is generally an additional article of his faith in God, not an estimate founded upon his experience of man. Nor is it a faith easily held. To argue that it is God's will and God's will must be fulfilled, implies that God will bring men to Himself whether they will or no, or that He will make them will to come: but so to coerce or override a will is to destroy its capacity for spiritual good and to make it incapable of any fellowship with God. In any case, man's disobedience of God shows that in the present at least God's will is not done, so that facts are against the assertion that it must be done. Or if a man believes that human nature is such that at last

it must turn to God, this again is a statement of faith rather than of experience, and it has much the same difficulties as the belief already considered. For what part does the will play here? This faith implies that a time will come to every soul when the alternative to turning Godward will be such that even the most selfish, sordid soul will turn to Him. Under such conditions turning to God would mean little. So that belief in future good for humanity is either optimism in the stricter sense as a judgment upon the facts of life or it is a somewhat ill-founded element of religious faith.

But when, looking upon the world, we ask what grounds there are for hope, judgments are notoriously contradictory. From the twilight one presages dawn, another proclaims oncoming night. And opposites of spiritual attitude may lie behind both of the opposite conclusions. With the pessimistic may go either cynicism or the apocalyptic forecast; while optimism, though it may give hope to activity, is probably as often the excuse for letting things slide in the assurance that they will come all right in the end.

These considerations show us that when we define optimism and pessimism so as to give them some meaning of their own, they forfeit

their right to a place in the affirmations of the Christian pulpit. A man asked Jesus, "Lord, are they few that be saved?" A pessimist would have answered, "Yes," an optimist, "No": Jesus answered neither 'Yes" nor "No," and it is clear that either of these answers would have blunted the edge of his command, "Strive ye to enter in by the narrow door." Uncertainty is more urgent than either optimism or pessimism.

When, therefore, a minister finds himself inclining either to pessimism or optimism, he should ask himself what is behind it. It may possibly be the unconscious recognition that both of these attitudes yield popular material for the pulpit. The prophecy of smooth things and the denunciation of the world's wickedness are equally enjoyed by most congregations, certainly more so than Jesus' tertium quid, "Strive ye." But the cause of the preacher's optimism or pessimism may be deeper. The attraction of optimism may be that it justifies his looking away from painful facts to a "serene result," or that it promises the success of his own career and justifies the identification of his success with the triumph of God. Pessimism, on the other hand, may be the result of yielding to depression due to unwise diet or insufficient

exercise. It may be the unconscious reflection of disappointment, so that a man may enjoy insisting upon the wickedness and hopelessness of a world that has not appreciated him.

The above considerations are also mostly to the point when it is not a matter of the preacher's permanent attitude of mind, but when in the pulpit he assumes an optimistic mood for encouragement's sake or a pessimistic one that he may reinforce a warning. The pessimism that was meant to warn may depress or, in some minds, may even tend to justify acquiescence in the evil as inevitable: the optimism that was meant to encourage effort may make it seem less needful, or may lead to unnecessary disappointment, for optimism always promises an easier success than facts warrant. Pulpit ruses of this sort are really attempts to make moral capital by abandoning a balanced and just judgment of facts and men, to cheat mankind into righteousness. They rank with the many other current attempts to reinforce suggestion by garbled accounts of reality, attempts which

> Win us with honest trifles, to betray 's
> In deepest consequence.

Of such are Christian Science and the many native and transatlantic schemes of pseudopsy-

chological "happification," which promise us good digestions if we will persistently tell ourselves that

> God's in His heaven—
> All's right with the world;

whereas we sell our souls to the Father of Lies unless we bear painfully in mind that all's not right with the world, that there are very many for whom the world has more thorns than larks and for whom not the morning only but much else is at sixes and sevens.

LOVING OUR FELLOWS

To love more than a certain select number of his fellows is not easy for any one except for a few rare souls whose love is Olympian rather than Christian. The injunction to do so is not more obligatory upon a minister than upon others, but his work is of the sort that has more obvious and immediate need for its fulfilment.

In one respect a minister is more liable than others to deceive himself into thinking it easy to meet this great requirement. His work lies very largely amongst his congregation, who are often kindly, appreciative, amiable men and women. He may think that in loving a large number of people in this way he is coming nearer to obedience than most men. But it must be remembered that although the love of a minister for the people of his congregation may be deep and pure, yet it may also be no more than the geniality of a shopkeeper for his customers, which, of course, may also be a genuine benevolence. If a minister forgets this, he may come to persuade himself that by being

condescendingly cordial to those who admire and love him, he is fulfilling his obligations in respect of love, whereas "Even sinners love those that love them." It is only on the supposition that they have fallen into this mistake that I can account for the behaviour of certain ministers who apparently consider themselves Christian. For I have known several whose courtesy could not be relied on to stretch beyond their congregations, in some cases seemingly because their congregations were large and the minister thought that if he behaved as a Christian, people might think that he was not quite sure of his right to be received as a notable.

However honest may be the love of a minister for his people, and however large a part it may be of his fulfilment of the command, the criterion of his obedience must be sought elsewhere. His duty of love may also be partly fulfilled in his seeking of the lost; but this again is not a sufficient test, for his motive here may be almost entirely pity. Now there is a pity that is akin to contempt, which is apparently the pity that is correlative to the sense of our own superiority, a kind which not infrequently passes for Christian. And there is a pity that is akin to, but is not the same as, love. In

either case something more than pity is needed. Hence it comes that we find a minister whose heart is tender towards all the lost sheep that he does not know and towards some of those that he does know, but who excuses himself from any tenderness towards a certain class of them by insisting that they are not sheep at all but wolves, whereas it may be that all that is wrong with them is that they are given to butting. Nor is the lost sheep always or even often a pathetic and distressed wanderer, welcoming rescue and lying gratefully upon the shoulder of the rescuer. It may be a silly fool of a sheep that delights to lead the shepherd a dance: it may be a nasty beast of a sheep too unsavoury for shouldering: it may be a cross-grained old ram that lies in ambush and charges from the rear: it may be a siren-spirited lamb, in going after which the shepherd is himself in danger of being lost.

A test case arises when some member shows dislike for the minister or makes himself a hindrance to the prosperity of the Church. What action should be taken in such a case depends on circumstances, which, however, should not control the minister's affections. There is a strong temptation here to adopt an air of defiance, to look upon the offender as something

to be got rid of and shown that he can be spared. Let the minister beware that what claims to be the courage of justice is not really the anger of wounded pride and threatened self-interest. Let him ask himself what love means now. Let him ask himself whether he would be as angry if he were considering the dislike or annoyance of a fellow minister by one of his congregation; and if not, let him remember that it is dangerous to claim to be righteously indignant until we are free from personal pique. He must learn to be sorry, not merely that the man's behaviour has hurt the Church but, as the man's mother might be, that he has so missed life's beauty. He must desire rather that the man should be rid of his evils than that the Church should be rid of him, and if there proves to be nothing for it but that the man must go, the minister must not reckon the departure a victory: the diseased limb has not been saved.

A similar test is the minister's attitude towards opponents of another sort. He may easily think he is moved by zeal for truth and right, when it is really dislike and annoyance for those who participate in what he condemns. The prohibitionist seems often more moved by contempt and animosity for the distiller and

publican than by love of those human values that intemperance destroys. Resentment against the wealthy seems sometimes the main emotional force of the pulpit that claims to be the partisan of the poor. It must be remembered that he does not love the poor truly who does not love the rich also. The temperance orator who does not love the brewer and publican may be less Christian than those he decries. A man may be a Protestant, but he is hardly a Christian if he does not love the Romanist.

We have not learnt to love any man truly until we have learnt to love our enemies, or, at least, without that, our love misses its true creative quality and becomes a mere unproductive quid pro quo—"If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye?" (or, as Justin Martyr has it, in what may be a more authentic version, "What new thing do you produce?"). Here we have the properly, effectively universal element in love. We are sometimes told that we should love all men, but the injunction, though formally right, may easily be made the alternative to the harder and more definite obligation of loving certain particular and perhaps particularly disagreeable men and women. Attention to love for the unseen and far off and statistically known must not be allowed as a

substitute for the honest attempt to love an unpleasant church official. Otherwise our Gospel for the heathen has lost the most effective element in its declaration of God's love. Our love has only a meretricious universality when we say we love all men but do not try to love our enemies. Jesus tells us that he who loves his enemy has the truly Godlike largeness of love.

Of course, we cannot feel towards those that hate us as we feel towards those that love us; it is a great part of the evil of hate that this is so. To love those who love us is joy: to love those who hate us is pain: we cannot have any delight in their fellowship. It racks love to stretch it to those we do not like. This means that the Christian love cannot avail itself of the Stoic peace that blunts the edge of enmity by declaring that the malicious man can really hurt no one but himself; for if we love him, his malice will hurt us even when it is aimed at another. The experience of this pain is the highest element in Christian love: it is to share God's love for the ideal of this man's life and God's suffering in his shortcoming. I knew a minister who used to say that the command to love our neighbour as ourselves never troubled him much, for he reckoned that no one but a

fool was ever much in love with himself. But there are things that a man ought to love in himself—truth and purity, loyalty and love, and God's ideal of him. And this indicates the sort of love with which a man ought to love not himself only but his neighbour and his enemy; and the lowlier and more expressible elements of love are, with this background, proof against disappointment and corruption.

Amongst the many affections covered by the name of love there are two that stand at opposite poles. There can be love of a sort between two that does not incline them to think any kindlier of their fellows. Some friendships are offended at the least infringement of their exclusiveness. Some marriages are the conversion of the mating instinct into an antisocial conspiracy. But the love that goes deep cannot be limited to a one and one relationship. To love and to be loved works certain changes in us which claim to be permanent and pervasive. Self is put to service: our preferences are altered: our outlook has a new standpoint. He who would trust his love for man or woman, or who knows himself beloved by man or woman, must think either that love is the blind dupe of blinder instincts, or that it has divine eyes which see the things that are not and that bring to

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nought the things that are. The idealizing vision of all vivid affection will, if limited to one or two, become dotage: it can save its dignity only by proclaiming itself a revelation of the dignity of all souls. It is through what love has taught us in the inmost circles that we learn to extend it where we are unloved, nor can we without this extension be loyal to our teacher. This is true of all true love and therefore most patent in the greatest. No man can contemplate the love of Jesus for mankind without loving Him, and no man can love Jesus Christ without becoming aware that he himself can and ought to, and wants to love even his enemies.

HUMILITY

When a minister is praised for some evidence of ability, he often replies, "O, it was nothing," or words to that effect. This is a lie in intent, because he does not think it was nothing, and probably also in point of fact, for ministers are seldom undeservedly praised except on the platform or in the press. He says what nobody believes, or is meant to believe, or thinks he believes, and it is counted unto him for righteousness, and he is valued and values himself the more for adding a palpably spurious reputation for humility to a repudiated but retained reputation for ability.

The trouble is that the commonness of this counterfeit and its obvious mendacity reveals the rarity of the true thing.

What is wrong with the notion of humility that, when someone says to a preacher, "That was a fine sermon," it forbids him to reply, "I congratulate you on the soundness of your judgment"? Why may not a man say what he thinks about his work? It is like a man laugh-

ing at his own jokes: he has every right to do so, if they are laughable, and especially if they are spontaneous. Surely the hen should not be forbidden to cackle over her own eggs. Why should a young mother be allowed to go into extravagances over her commonplace baby while the preacher is supposed to be obtuse to the qualities of his very fine sermon? The suppression is unnatural and has ill results. For since ministers and other soloists are not allowed to praise their own work directly, they are sorely tempted to do so indirectly, by depreciating the achievement of others. It may be here noted that one of the surest indications of a preacher's character is his attitude towards the preaching of others. When it comes to assessing the merits of their colleagues, not a few preachers show a Jewish glee in discount, in which they might, if they were wise, discover that they were something less than Christian.

But to return to the point, why is a Christian minister expected to say about his work what everybody knows he does not think? It is probably partly because those who praise a man's work wish to confer a benefit, which is belittled if the praise is stale news to the recipient. It is partly also that often when people speak to a preacher of his preaching, a certain spiritual

modesty makes them use terms that are not the most direct expression of their meaning. They will praise the ability of a sermon when what has moved them has been the power of the Spirit, and therefore they would rightly resent being thought to intend a personal compliment, and the minister, to show that he has not misunderstood them, repudiates it as such. Nonsense may often convey what we are too shy to say plainly.

Be this as it may, there is no doubt that, unless we are to discard the teaching of Jesus, humility must be counted a vital part of Christian life, and there is scarcely less doubt that ministers generally have too little of it. A student of the subject once told me that he had examined the indexes of many books on Christian ethics and had never found one that contained the word "humility." That was probably because the books were written by ministers, and it is a matter of observation that the commonest characteristic of the clerical face is the absence of any sign of humility, or rather the presence of indications to the contrary. Their facial expressions range from the martyred smile that complains, "Why are you not all as good as I am?" to the imperial eye that proclaims, "I am Sir Oracle, and when I speak,

let no dog bark." An old minister of my acquaintance once wrote to a candidate for the ministry pressing him to undergo a certain course of training, as otherwise he would go through his career with a continual sense of inferiority. The young man replied that he wished rather to be counselled how to escape the air of superiority which so far as he could see was almost the only thing which one could be sure all ministers carried from their training; which reply showed him correct in confessing his need for humility.

Why there should be this "plentiful lack" of humility in ministers is easily seen. The commonest bias of human nature is for a man to think well of himself. Often also a position of dignity, such as that of a minister, induces pride, while his prominence in concerns which people respect and revere makes it in many ways easy for him to think himself more important and virtuous than others. Humility in ministers of religion thus comes to be as rare and unnatural as pearls in oysters. Yet without humility no minister can begin to contemplate receptively the things which it is his business to teach and preach.

The common objection to a man's praise of his own work is supported by two considera-

tions. It is waste of speech, for we know without being told that a man thinks well of his work. Genuine exceptions are rare enough to be negligible, and in any case are too painful for conversation: when a man is really ashamed of his work, he tells his God, not his neighbour. And a man's judgment of his own work is of very little value. So strong is self-bias and so moody, that a man always puts too high or too low a value upon what he does. He is also apt to think most of an achievement because it costs him most effort, but, for that very reason, it is seldom the thing in which he really excels. His praise does not help us to a truer appreciation of his work. Of course, we tolerate his inexact self-depreciation because it affords opportunity for amiable contradiction. Whereas the self-praiser must be left to his solo.

When there is apparent antagonism between truth and any desirable quality, the surest cure is more truth. If the preacher compares certain qualities of his preaching with those of other preachers, he may have to acknowledge that he can do better than they. But to say that this is true and that truth must take precedence of modesty is to judge on less than half the evidence. For the chief point is that though such a comparison might be true, it would not

be the whole truth. What business has he with such comparisons at all?

The only standard by which a preacher may judge his work is its efficiency to express the truth of God. Any consideration of his preaching that omits this aspect is judging the book by its binding. When speech is really important, when the heart speaks, no man wants to congratulate himself on the form of it. If the lover plumes himself on the rhetoric of his speech, let the loved one beware: no man in love was ever satisfied with the expression of his love. It is so with the preacher: his subject is his critic. And the presence of this criterion in his mind will so effectually deflate his vanity, that he will probably have to make some subordinate employ of his self-regarding instincts to safeguard his grammar and pronunciation.

So also in his general attitude to life (which gives his face its expression) he should keep in mind the things that lie behind all those special conditions of his place that make humility hard for him, and then he will find that the dignity of his position lies in the greatness of Him whom he serves and who, because of His greatness, cannot be served without humility. He who goes about with an air of superiority has forgotten the God he serves and renounced the

livery of His servants. Humility in a minister of religion does not depend upon the atrophy of those instincts that usually make for vainglory, but upon a continual and lively recognition of the greatest of all truths, which absorbs that bias in the humiliating dignity of a divine Father's presence.

SELF-GLORY

THE temptation to which a minister of religion is most commonly and most constantly open is to think too highly of himself. This comes upon him both as pastor and preacher. A congregation likes its pastor to visit, and a man who is given to understand that his visits are always welcome comes readily to think that his presence is more desirable than that of other men. He should therefore remember the motives that lie behind the desire for a minister's visit. Of many in the congregation it would be more exact to say, not that they enjoy the minister's visit, but that they like to be able to say that he has visited them. The chief value of his visit to them is that it is a tribute to their importance, and those to whom it has this value are naturally in great need of such support. Others will make him welcome because the poor soul needs encouragement. Others again want to know the man whose ministrations are part of the divine provision for their souls. Some want advice or friendship or understanding.

Some want a confessor for their sins: more want a religious authority, less inclined than God to be personal, to whom they may confess the sins of others. So that, taking it all in all, the minister has little reason to attribute his popularity to his personal excellence or charm.

He should also remember that his position in the worshipping community inclines people to think favourably of him. To think well of our leader is oblique self-praise to which all are inclined. There is also the pride of possession working in the same direction. As young parents magnify the gifts and graces of their children, so a congregation will see genius and sanctity in a minister because he is theirs, though these qualities may be quite invisible to those who do not look from the angle of possession. And all people who are seriously religious will think as highly as possible of one who is so intimately associated with much of their most sacred experience. The worshipper does not consider, and does not want to consider, the crucifix's coarseness of workmanship and unloveliness of line; and the minister should not forget that a valuable and holy part of the affection of his congregation is given to him because he is a symbol.

These cautions are more needed nowadays

than they used to be. For a large section of the population dislikes ministers and is contemptuous of them. The minister knows this and is tempted to compensate himself by taking a surreptitious enjoyment in the opinion and attitude of the narrower circle in which his calling has not lost its sacredness. If he does this, he is wrong. For, in so far as the common attitude is justified, it calls for humility and amendment; and in so far as it is not justified, it is the reproach of the cross, which he may not evade. In any case the popular objection is to his calling, and cannot be efficiently countered by any private and personal satisfaction.

As preacher, too, the minister is peculiarly liable to self-exaltation. Every man who undertakes to speak to a gathering of his fellows is thereby put into a position where the emotions and ambitions of the mob-leader come into play. And the mob-leader wants to impress, to dominate, to dazzle. His power of suggestion depends upon his prestige. How can he exercise his prestige without feeling it? How can he feel it without a generous appreciation of his own excellence and a religious reverence for his right to lead? And with this may come the touchiness of the minor artist. The great artist is sure of his ideals and methods, and

hopes the world will some day climb to an understanding and enjoyment of his work: the lesser artist, unsure of himself, depends upon the response of his contemporaries. And since a sermon is spoken to a congregation, if the preacher treats it as a work of art he is very likely to bring himself into the category of the minor artist, nettled at adverse criticism, agonized at neglect, passionate for praise.

The preacher must therefore remember that he is not a mob-leader but an ambassador, and that a sermon that draws attention to the preacher is likely rather to obscure than to display his Master's glory. A fable tells us that a savage who desired that his bow should be the most ornate of his tribe, so becarved it that it lost all its missive power. So one hears sermons so tricked with points and periods that the gaunt outlines of the cross are overlaid by an unconscious caricature of its ambassador.

The sermon that aims at being a work of art should always be subscribed "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, by Himself." For a sermon is not a work of art. In so far as a work of art is good, it is complete in itself. A sermon that is complete in itself is a bad sermon. In so far as the preacher is an artist, his material is not the sermon but the lives of his

hearers. His sermon is his brush, his mallet, his chisel. His sermon is not a fugue or a sonata, complete in its beauty, but, as Paul suggests, a bugle-call—a meaningless nuisance, unless it draws immediate attention to things other and greater than itself.

THE SNARE OF THE ABSTRACT

I BELIEVE that many people go seriously wrong in soul because they do not recognize the danger of abstract moral terms. Ministers and most other thoughtful and well-inclined men and women feel the need of providing themselves with a general idea as to what they should do with themselves, in order that their control of life may be consistent and effective. It seems to them that without some such inclusive idea their various interests will be at cross purposes with each other, and life will be frittered away on disconnected and not sufficiently worthy impulses. So they covenant with themselves that, so far as in them lies, this shall be the master purpose of their lives—to be good and to do good. The conclusion seems irreproachable, for does not the word "good" summarize and include all that man ought to be? Is any maxim less questionable than, "Be good, sweet maid, and let who can be clever; Do lovely things," etc.?

Now, logically it is true that to be good and to do good include all that man ought to be and

do; but he has made a simpleton of himself who does not know that unimpeachable logic is one of the disguises under which truth most often eludes us. Logically we tell ourselves that to be good includes all single overcomings of evil in us. It includes the defeat of all temptations to meanness, cruelty, selfishness, uncleanness, sloth, cowardice, untruth. It includes loyalty to truth, love for beauty, reverence for goodness. And yet almost inevitably, when we determine with ourselves to be good, our attitude of mind is quite different from that in which we face any concrete occasion for moral activity. When we are really tempted to untruth, uncleanness, cowardice or meanness, we are ashamed of ourselves: we fight fiercely and disgustedly, as with a beast whose touch defiles. But when we determine to be good, we feel rather pleased with ourselves. When we are constrained by the truth, moved by the beautiful, overawed by the good, our thoughts are all drawn out to that which stands before us. But when we determine to be good, we are apt to think rather of ourselves, either in the present or future, as lovable and admirable. So easily in morality does the passing from the concrete to the abstract play into the hands of self-righteousness.

It is not otherwise with our actions. To do good logically includes all fair and useful tasks, all acts of helpfulness, all endeavours to lessen evil and pain, to cleanse and beautify the world, to help men to the height of their possibilities. But here, too, when we pass from the single to the general, there is danger. The Good Samaritan (who probably did not think of himself as good) was moved with compassion. But the man who determines to live the life of a Good Samaritan will, if he is not careful, be moved mainly by the desire to be able to think of himself under so pleasant a form. When we generalize the several and appealing needs of the world and the things that are in themselves worth doing, then the self-forgetfulness that is natural to the single deed silently departs and the centre of the stage is left to the doer. Thus the man who covenants with himself to spend his life in doing good is in great danger of coming to think too much of himself, and of doing what he does, not so much because he loves the thing his deed establishes, as because he loves to contemplate himself as the establisher.

This is likely to happen because over against the idea of good etiolated by abstraction there always stands the inclusive, warm, sensitive,

massive idea of self; and as soon as the urgency of concrete need and the imperativeness of concrete worth is no longer felt, then this self takes precedence as the doer of all acts. And this is blasphemy, for thus the self claims to be the Author of all good. Here we arrive at the heart of the matter, and at the way of escape from the snare. We see that conscious morality must be religious or it becomes self-righteous. He who determines to live doing good and forgets that there is but one Author of all good, he who determines to be good and forgets that none is good save One, is bound to lose all sure hold of humility and sincerity: from the standpoint of self-regard he sets himself to acts that demand self-forgetfulness if they are to be truly done.

The only point of view from which we can in quietness commit ourselves to a life that shall be free from inward contradiction, quick to seize all chances of good, strong to resist all solicitations of evil, is that in which we recognize that all true human goodness is a response to the goodness of God. Every chance of doing good, every cry of the world's need, is then but a special opportunity of serving Him whose majesty commands the loyalty of our quiet thought. In the contemplation of God as we

know Him in Jesus we find the only idea that is inclusive enough to give unity to all our being and commanding enough to forestall the usurpations of self. Jesus taught that the bottom of all human goodness was to love God with all the heart and mind and soul and strength, and His life is the fact that makes credible a God to whom this is the only fair response. Jesus includes all that the mind can imagine of human goodness, and the contemplation of Him sets us at once in the thick of His battle: between His worshipfulness and His warfare, both of them so all-inclusive and aggressively concrete, self has little chance to trick us with the abstract.

GETTING INTO THE NEWSPAPERS

Most ministers (and their wives) are pleased to see their names in a newspaper paragraph. Some deliberately cultivate this form of appearance before the public, possibly thinking that the publicity of the preacher aids the publication of the Gospel. Some consider it good business for the Church that its ministers should appear in the press. Some are born with a dominant instinct for self-advertisement. Some have caught a chronic itch for notoriety.

But if he who is pleased to see his name in the paper is a man of any wisdom, he will pardon his vanity for the amusement it affords him. Whatsoever is more than this cometh of evil and leads to more evil: for it prompts a man to give attention to the things that make attractive copy rather than to the things that are essential to his work. He preaches and acts with a view to the press. Thus we see that the Rev. Horatio Topnotch is advertised to preach on "Solomon and the Sex Problem," or the Rev.

Blaise MacLimelight on "The Bright Side of Murder."

It does not need much experience or thought to see that the interests of the press and the pulpit are different. Newspapers are commercial concerns and their profits depend upon their circulation, so that they are all compelled to select their copy with a view to what the public likes to read. With some this is the only criterion, but many, while they give chief attention to this point, are also seriously concerned to uphold some particular economic or political or other interest, but, with the exception of the specifically religious journals (which we are not now discussing), this interest is not religious, and consequently religious items are taken as betting news is taken, because of their value in popularizing the paper.

It is seldom, however, that what makes interesting copy for the public recounts anything that helps the ends for which the Church exists. Soon after I had entered upon my duties in a church, the reporter of a local paper called upon me, and after explaining that the policy of his paper was to be on the friendliest terms with the churches, he asked me to let him know if ever I was going to say anything important in the pulpit. Doing my best to understand

and adopt his point of view, I never sent for him. And yet all my sermons are important, as important as I can make them. I am fairly sure that "if Christ came to Chicago" or to any other city with a press, the blue pencil would go through the Sermon on the Mount, and though we might get the castigation of the Scribes and Pharisees, all that we could be sure of would be a few exaggerated miracles.

A sermon is seldom good copy unless it fulfils Schiller's maxim:—

> Would you please alike the holy folk and the worldling?
> Paint the sensual then, but paint the devil thereto,

or presents one side of a controversial point with precisely that lack of balance and charity that mark it as unchristian. No pulpit utterance ever made such good copy as when a great London preacher prayed the unchristian prayer that God would damn the Sultan.

When we pass from words to deeds, the situation is more marked still. A man throughout a long life may give himself so entirely to the Christian ministry as to be a very saint of God, and yet nothing in his life may afford a paragraph that a newspaper would print. But

let a minister lose his temper and strike a parishioner, let him be involved in an otherwise quite uninteresting divorce case, and no paper in the land will miss it. A minister of the Gospel makes the best copy when he commits a crime, and his appearance in the newspaper should always make him ask himself whether it is not at bottom some moral weakness that has brought him there.

With religious newspapers it is somewhat different. Many of them serve the cause of Christianity honestly and well. But they labour under the difficulty that they, like their lay brethren, must be popular with their purchasers. They must print what their readers want to read. Hence the copy a religious journal likes is that which shows its readers that they are right for more reasons than they thought. Sheer piety and impartial wisdom are not interesting. Readers want controversy, but they want their side of it. The preachers and writers popular in such journals are therefore not the Lord's protagonists, but those who slay the wounded of the enemy and rob their dead, or perhaps we should call them the Lord's army contractors, who do big business behind the lines.

Another tendency of the religious press comes from the same cause. People like to read

about celebrities, but your celebrities must be few, or you overburden the memory of your public. Consequently each religious journal tends to have a certain few ministers of note, anything about whom is welcomed, while the rest come in only by dint of extraordinary interest of matter or event. The notoriety of the few is often official or otherwise accidental, yet the impression is created in the minds of readers that these few are the men that count and are worth listening to, and that the rest come a long way behind and are to be accepted only when they cannot be escaped. Whereas, even if we grant that these dozen or so newspaper heroes are really more pious and able than all their colleagues, still the gradation down from them will be by imperceptible degrees. Thus the religious newspaper's necessity for popularity almost inevitably biases the reader's mind as to what is really effective in the ministry.

This newspaper hero-worship must be annoying to the wise amongst its objects, for they get the cream of that fulsomeness with which religious journalism commonly makes a sop of its personal notices. They must feel about it as Mary Magdalene did when the mediæval Church worshipped three of her legs.

PERSONAL PECULIARITIES

CERTAIN ministers affect a peculiarity of manner and appearance which they seem to think increases their significance. They wear their forelocks long and toss them about in the pulpit: they dress unusually: they cultivate tricks of speech and mannerisms of behaviour; and all this is done seemingly to advertise the proposition that they are not like other ministers. Most congregations love to have it so. Very few church members are able to judge whether their minister is outstanding or not in the qualities proper to the Christian pulpit, so that the majority are glad to take the work of his hairdresser or haberdasher as evidence that theirs is no ordinary preacher. If a minister has the look and manner of a third-rate actor, his congregation will boast of his "personality": if he dresses and behaves like a Christian gentleman, it will be too hard for most of them to discover his originality.

A permanent "make up" of this sort is useful to most public speakers, especially if they lack

other distinction. It helps to distinguish one speaker from another and gives a marked visual image as a centre for the mental associations of the multitude. Such peculiarities, both in themselves and as a centre of association, add to the power of suggestion which an orator wields over his audience. If you can make people stare, you have their attention, and that is half the battle. People, too, are more inclined to believe a speaker who is not too much like themselves. This is connected with the mob-instinct—the instinct of the herd towards the herd-leader. And in this connection we must note that the people who like their minister to look extraordinary also like him to be dogmatic, positive, emphatic, self-assertive, something of a pulpit bully: all this counts for "personality."

But the preacher should observe that although certain characteristics of the relation of the mob to its leader are apt to obtrude themselves into preaching, yet the relation of a congregation to its preacher is essentially different. The Christian preacher is always a man with a Master. Everything that calls more than necessary attention to the preacher diverts attention from his Master, defeats the end of preaching and "shows a pitiful ambition

in the fool that uses it." A man's desire to shine in the pulpit is treachery to his vocation.

> A substitute shines brightly as a king
> Until a king be by.

That is true of preaching. The attempt to shine in the pulpit is the preacher's attempt to substitute himself for a King whose absence is necessary to the success of his endeavour and is secured by the nature of it.

Let it not be thought that the avoidance of these dangers would reduce the preacher to a colourless transparency. A cult of personal appearance makes it very hard for a man to forget himself. But it is only when a man does forget himself that he is truly himself: then his dignity and significance is in his soul and not in his hair or collar or tie or trick of speech or gesture. Probably for the best effectiveness it is good for a preacher to know himself insignificant in appearance and speech. In any case, the most effectual evangelist and probably one of the most moving preachers the Christian Church has known was well aware that his bodily presence was thought weak and his speech of no account. Such a man is less likely to forget that what matters is that people should obey the Master, not

that they should admire the servant. When the preacher forgets that he is a deputy, he sacrifices divine authorities and powers that he may satisfy the big boy's desire to make the little boy stare.

WHERE WE DIFFER

An important factor in the experience of every man who values his judgment is that in certain matters he comes to conclusions opposite to those reached by others who are as good and intelligent as he is. This happens in all interests, especially in politics, but we confine ourselves to its place in Christian belief and conduct, where it has peculiar concomitants and is peculiarly liable to produce regrettable results.

It is generally in connection with these points of difference that a man sets the highest value on his judgment. On them, both to himself and others, he pronounces with great emphasis and assurance. They tend to become the special "message" of the preacher and readily provide the goal of a crusade or cause to which the minister devotes himself as his best service to the kingdom of God.

Yet it seems unlikely that a matter of Christian faith or conduct upon which good and intelligent Christians differ can be of more than secondary importance. To think that after

honest endeavour to reach the truth, and especially after discussion full enough to eliminate misunderstanding, they can still differ upon any point of really primary importance seems very like abjuring faith in the Holy Spirit. This consideration suggests an interpretation and application of the Vincentian Canon that might be useful.

A Christian minister should therefore be careful lest those things in which he differs from his fellow-Christians become of too great importance to him, for they are very apt to do so. Not only will special interest accumulate round matters of dispute, but they will demand special attention and support in face of criticism and opposition. The always very partial combative instinct will be stimulated. Above all, a man is very likely to attribute the difference between his conclusions and those of others to the superiority of his sensitiveness or intelligence, so that his self-regard is engaged in the consideration and propagation of his point, and he is thus in the toils of what is one of the subtlest and strongest of temptations—when what he takes to be his destined and peculiar service to the kingdom of God entails the covert advertisement of his own superiority.

Concerning these differences a man should consider that they are not likely to be due to his greater intelligence or goodness. If they were, that very superiority would see them in just perspective and would relegate them to the secondary place to which they belong. He should remember that such differences may be due to what we have lately been taught to call a complex, which keeps out of the mind's eye but pulls the wires that work it. They may be due to difference in temperament, which makes one man sensitive to one class of facts and another to another. In view of the complexity of life, they may be due to logical deductions from incomplete data. They may arise from varieties of religious experience, each incomplete but with differences of incompleteness. It is thus from every point of view highly probable that when good and thoughtful Christians differ, they are both partly wrong.

What then is a man to do about these things? He must not relinquish what he is convinced is right or true because another, as good and able as himself, is convinced otherwise. But he will ask himself whether, after all, he may not be wrong. If he advances the difference in public, he will do so with reluctance and pain.

He will be half ashamed to differ from such others, for even if he is quite sure that he is right and they are wrong, it is a matter for sorrow that his brethren, despite their best endeavour, cannot find the truth. He will be cautious as to what time and energy he spends upon propaganda for his difference, because the more important a concern the less likely is he to have all the right on his side and the others all the wrong; whereas, if on any given matter he is right and the other good people are wrong, it is not likely to be a matter of great intrinsic importance. Under certain circumstances, of course, a man is right in giving much time and labour to a matter of small moment, especially if he is particularly qualified to deal with it. But he should not let his choice of endeavour disturb his perspective.

In any case, he must not let emphasis upon his point of difference lead him to neglect common and unquestioned goods. Let him be careful lest he seeks a confirmation of his judgment by undervaluing the goodness of those who differ from him. Let the partisan of reform remember that hatred of wrong and of mistake in others is very perilous to the soul that is not itself contrite and alive to its own aptitude for error. Let him who, by that in

which he differs from his fellow-Christians, would serve the Christ, remember how he himself differs from his Master, and beware lest he is so occupied with the first difference as to grow insensible to the second.

This chapter is especially for Modernists, Fundamentalists, Pacifists, and all who emphasize that on which they differ from their fellow-Christians.

OVER-SYSTEMATIZATION

A MINISTER, by the nature of his work, has to meet, in an acute form, a common difficulty arising from the two conditions of effective mental activity. Our intake towards both the world of outward fact and the movements of our inward life must be sensitive and unprejudiced, otherwise our mental life grows out of touch with reality. But we cannot think of our experience or act on it without setting it in order. The availability of our knowledge for action depends upon its systematization, while the effectiveness of the activity itself depends upon its own orderliness and consistency. We thus piece and formulate our knowledge into a system, which once formed offers resistance to all influences that would modify it. Not only are we loath to own our conclusions mistaken, but both thought and act run readily into habit, and action commits us to situations which generally call for more actions of the same sort. Thus we become more and more reluctant to modify

our system of ideas, especially in so far as our active life is based upon it.

But, because of the limits of our experience and intelligence, our system of ideas is never adequate to the facts and constitution of our external universe or of our internal life. The days bring us unfamiliar events and unconsidered relationships both from our intercourse with the world and from the undomesticated regions of our own being, and these new experiences set before us the alternative of either modifying the inadequate system of our ideas or suborning our judgment so as to transform the facts into conformity with our preconceptions. Our manifold prejudice in favour of our past conclusions inclines us to support them to the detriment of our truth, and the reluctance to rescind our thinking is strongest where it is most disastrous. For it is of utmost importance that the men who are expert in particular branches of knowledge should be sensitive to all new experience that demands the reshaping of current theories. But professional convention and prestige and indurated habit of thought and act are likely to make such men the strongest opponents of any modification of accepted ways of thinking and acting. It has often been so in medicine

and as often in religion. The minister is generally officially committed to a certain creed and code, and in any case his vocation as religious and moral teacher leads him to form a system of thought and conduct, to the application and inculcation of which he dedicates his life. Hence more than others he will be inexorably wedded to his system, and he may easily come to think that his loyalty to God and his service to the world are at stake in its maintenance and that to change it would impeach his influence as a thinker and his authority as a teacher. He will therefore find it very difficult to keep an unprejudiced reception for new experience when it calls for a reconstruction of his system; and he will be in danger of losing hold of reality and becoming more and more sophisticated in thought and act. For when we refuse to modify our system at the appeal of fact, the result is not merely the exclusion or distortion of the one fact in question: if we deal unfairly with any fragment of our experience, a taint of dishonesty infects our dealings with all the rest. This relation of inward truth to the unprejudiced contemplation of fact, and its supreme importance, are monumented in the words, "The light of the body is the eye: if there-

fore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

It is therefore supremely important that a minister should be willing to modify his ideas, and he must not wonder if he finds it very difficult to do so. It is, on the whole, well that it should be difficult. For the man who will admit no new thought is little worse than he whose whole creed is at the mercy of the last book he has read. There is something wrong with the soul of the man whose mind does not grow, but there is a movement which is not growth; and the man who is tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine has apparently lost hold of the tree of life. A considerable degree of resistance to change is necessary if mistaken changes are to be excluded. Too facile an acceptance of the new is the special temptation of those men who desire a reputation for intelligence but find it too hard to win where there are many competitors, and who therefore follow like gulls in the wake of all that leaves terra firma. The result of such action is that the new thing is misunderstood because it is not seen in rela-

tion to the rest of experience as represented by past thinking. For the new experience modifies the old thinking only because it is a fresh bit of an indivisible whole; from which it follows that a fair view of the new cannot be had in forgetfulness of the old. The new is misread unless it is seen as part of a whole, much of which we have already considered, and though it may call for a modification of our past conclusions, it cannot be understood without them. "Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple of the kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

To accept the new without doing justice to the old is to depreciate the value of both, but to refuse to modify past conclusions in face of new experiences is to pluck out both our eyes because they question our infallibility. The system of ideas by which we live must be as dear as life, and as ready as life to develop anew in the face of new issues; but we lose our souls unless that development is wholesome.

It may help us here to note that our system of thought is composed of two different sorts of affirmations. Some are of the nature of

scientific or historic statements dependent upon evidential data, or are deductions from such statements. This may not be their real genesis, but it is on this assumption that we give them their place in our system. It is these that are subject to correction by new experience in the shape of fresh data or revaluation of evidence or modification of mental method. Examples of such are the distinction between the miraculous and non-miraculous, the historicity of this or that narrative, the concrete application of the teaching of Jesus, the superior rightness of the Church to which we belong.

But our system contains other affirmations which, while they find interpretation and enrichment in experience, are not thereby subject to correction. Possibly we may have to include here only one article of belief and one law of conduct—that in Jesus we know God and that we ought to act in His spirit. The only experience that could correct these commitments is the appearance of one better than Jesus, a suggestion which to the Christian is irrelevant because it is inconceivable, for to prove Jesus morally wrong would be to destroy the Christian's confidence in his own power to distinguish good and evil.

The intrinsic majesty of these two things will be injured if other elements of our system, which belong to the first class, are given similar reverence. There is also a danger, if other elements are not distinguished from these, that when the vulnerable suffer we shall get panic-stricken and think that all is lost; and that in trying to protect those that may be corrected or cancelled by new experience we avoid what is essential to the growth of the more vital and central elements. For we need the stimulus of the uncomfortable and the shock of the unexpected, if vital truth is to retain its vitality. If a man at twenty can say, "I know God in Jesus Christ," at fifty he can say no more; and at fifty he cannot say as much, unless the experience of the years has given ever greater meaning to the words and filled him with expectancy of more.

BEING OVER-OCCUPIED

WILBERFORCE, so we are often told for our admonition, in the height of his anti-slavery crusade, was asked about his soul and replied that he had forgotten that he had one. Probably the questioner's attitude provoked him to answer rather in bravado than in truth, for no man who values the soul of others can for long forget his own, or pretends to do so.

There are times in every wholesome and active life when the man ought to forget his soul. Such times may stretch without a break over a considerable period, but this should happen only when he is thronged by unquestionable duties thrust on him by circumstances beyond his control. If he can, he should set such limits to his occupations as will allow him frequently to take knowledge of his soul. This is not selfish counsel, for a man's soul is the chief instrument of his work, and to be unconcerned about it may be as dangerous to others as a surgeon's unconcern about the edge and cleanness of his instruments. Long and total

immersion in outward, and especially public, activity may blunt a man's moral sensitiveness, dim his insight and coarsen his motives, and this, of course, will react upon the value of his work. It will make his life barren of those intimacies which might often be his best gift to his fellows and his greatest gain from them.

Such considerations are especially needful for the minister. Without a certain leisure, limited but sacred, he cannot be efficient in his proper task. He needs it not only for the good of his own soul but for the spiritual quality of his work. This is obvious in two ways.

Unless his own soul is alive, his work will cease to touch the souls of his fellows. The soul lives by fellowships, human and divine, mediated in many ways, but by no means satisfactorily and completely provided by the more or less haphazard and often disappointing and exasperating contacts incidental to the day's official duties. Unless these contacts are to be destructive, they must be supplemented in hours of quiet by the select fellowship of books (or—rarely, alas—of living saints) or by the more direct divine fellowship of thought, meditation and prayer.

As preacher, also, he needs ample time for his work. A hurriedly made sermon depre-

ciates the truth it offers. Nor must we allow this conclusion to be weakened by the experience that sermons preached upon emergency with scant preparation sometimes prove helpful to their hearers. This is probably because in such cases the preacher expresses in simplest form the dominant thoughts by which he himself lives. It is clear that this cannot happen frequently, and obviously is not the method by which to preach weekly for years to the same congregation.

Time upon the weekly sermons must not be scanted. Otherwise they will be not only dull —the preacher's greatest sin in the sight of men, but untrue—his greatest sin in God's sight. Not only is time needed for the quest of material and the elaboration of thought, but it is still more important that a preacher should not feel himself so pressed for time that he must catch at the first minnow of a thought that "swims into his ken." He must have time to discard: a very important part of every useful and honest preacher's time is that which is spent upon sermons that he never preaches.

It is also very bad for a preacher that all, or almost all, the hours of his study should be spent directly on the making of sermons.

For it will compel his thought to contort itself in the strain after difference of form instead of having time to grow in reach and penetration. He will be driven to use unassimilated borrowings, and though there are apparently some young birds whose parents feed them by regurgitating recently swallowed and half-digested morsels, a congregation cannot be fed so. If a man's study is always bent upon the material of his next discourse, his mind will be closed to influences that call for readjustment of his thinking. He will welcome only what can be turned to immediate account in the reinforcement of his accepted ideas, and his sensitiveness to all else will be gradually atrophied. A living conviction can be held only through the continual transfiguration of old thought by new experience, and this takes time. Otherwise the emphasis of conviction is gradually replaced by the emphasis of habit, until the preacher achieves the absolute assurance that comes from an inability to conceive how anyone can think anything else on the matter, which is precisely the emphasis proper to a parrot.

Especially in these days when the need for thought in the preacher is greater than ever, he must have time for his work. Thinking is a

slow business. Thought after thought has to be evoked, considered and discarded, before one is found that will stand all available tests. And when, as sometimes happens, a solution flashes spontaneously into the mind, it is generally found to come after hours of apparently barren quest. Miraculous draughts from the deep come only to those who have toiled all night and taken nothing.

It is to be feared that because of the labour and cost of religious thinking at the present time, some ministers welcome the multiplicity of occupation that excuses them from much mental endeavour. They are encouraged in this attitude by the fact that nearly all religious synods and assemblies show themselves far more anxious to influence the opinions of others than to clarify and rectify their own.

A special temptation arises from the demand of many churches, implied if not expressed, that the minister should endeavour to "keep a hold" of the younger generation by taking part in their games and spending much time and energy in inventing and arranging entertainments for them. No doubt if the minister is a good man his fellowship will be beneficial, and his presence will secure the young their pleasures

under harmless conditions. But if that is all, he is little more than a senior nursemaid. If he is to be more than this, then the time and energy spent in the recreations of the younger part of his charge must not encroach upon what is needed for his preaching and teaching. Otherwise he will insensibly lead them to value the fellowship of the tennis court and billiard table more than that of worship, and will give them an accredited example of a life that fails to give chief emphasis to his chief concern.

Many of the activities that congest a minister's time-table are in themselves good. They concern things that ought to be done, and he may say, possibly with truth, "If I do not do them, no one else will." But even if that were indubitable, it does not follow that he is right in busying himself with them. Any man does wrong who undertakes activities, no matter how beneficial, if doing so prejudices the efficient discharge of the specific duties of his vocation. A lawyer whom I knew was compelled in honesty to attribute an oversight which seriously affected his client's interests to his own preoccupation with Sunday-school work. Such a mistake is especially harmful in a minister, since the right discharge of his specific duties is, with very rare exceptions, intrin-

sically much more important than anything else on which he can spend his time.

A minister is sometimes tempted to be active in philanthropy or reform in order to win approval for his vocation from those who are likely to undervalue its specific functions. But he should remember that if he allows those functions to suffer in this endeavour, he is confirming the world's judgment as to their secondary importance, while at the same time his preoccupation with the things the world approves will bring upon those of his colleagues who do not share his philanthropic or political dissipations the charge of indifference or laziness, for if he has time for such things, why not they?

Even the minister who gives chief attention to leadership in worship is liable to a special sort of over-occupation. He may be so diligent in preparation of the thought and expression of his sermon as to neglect or even damage more important factors both of it and other parts of the worship. No man of modesty will underrate the mental effort required for the making of a sermon; but many preachers are so anxious about its intellectual elements, so desirous for these to be as perfect as possible, that they continue to work past the limit of

profitable endeavour and enter the pulpit mentally jaded. A more serious result is that this anxiety perturbs their fellowship with God and estranges their confidence in the Gospel. After honest preparation of his material, the preacher should remember that since the object of his preaching is to help his hearers to faith in God, he must himself exercise that faith in the very act of preaching. Even if he makes a fool of himself, all is not lost: in fact, unless he is willing for Christ's sake to run this risk, he has little personal enjoyment of the Gospel he preaches.

LAZINESS

I HAVE known only one minister whom I had good reason to call lazy. I believe such are rare and that for every one who could by common standards be reckoned lazy you may find ten overworked. But a certain element of laziness, or rather dislike of certain sorts of effort, is to be found in most men. A man may be continuously active along a certain line because it is his line of least resistance: he is really shirking the mental effort of modifying the direction of his activity. If he is lazy in everything he is probably unwell. So that a minister should not think that because his time is fully occupied he is free from all laziness, for he may be guilty of it in spending too much time on the things that he does with ease and pleasure and in postponing the disagreeable duty. This amounts to a lack of order in his work which will compromise his freedom.

For most men it would be unwise to attempt to remedy this by rigid adherence to a set time-table. As a matter of fact, such rigidity

is itself a species of laziness, for it is intended to obviate the trouble of more frequent and better adapted planning; and in any case the nature of a minister's work makes it impossible. However it is to be explained, whether by mood or other psychological antecedents, or by weather or digestion, it is true that certain sorts of work are more easily and better done at one time than at another. There come hours and days when it is very difficult to think to any good purpose, but when other tasks can be handled quite efficiently. A particular case of this sort is after some exciting incident. If a man then sits down to think, he will waste most of his mental energy in expelling incursive survivals of the recent disturbance. He had better betake himself to some occupation where the necessity of attending to externalities will itself supply a corrective to the insurgent memories until age enfeebles them.

It is best to have a provisional time-table allowing considerable elasticity, but with the stipulation that certain things, especially the duties we dislike, must be done before a certain time.

But it is not enough to get these disagreeable tasks done. We ought to be able to see that a duty is worth doing; and therefore distaste for

a required action generally shows either that it is not a duty or that we have not rightly seen it and our relation to it. A comparatively unimportant aspect may make us shrink from a duty which when seen in its essential nature we are glad to do; or we may find that our reluctance grows from an inadequacy that must be recognized and remedied. Some men shrink from visiting the sorrow-stricken, but this very sensitiveness should make them eager to do anything that comforts sorrow. If they think that they are without any power of consolation, then let them look to themselves and ask why.

TEMPER

THERE is no reason to suppose that ministers are generally better tempered than other men, but they suffer from the disability of being expected always to be angelic. As a consequence a minister's temper has very few outlets, often no more than two, his sermons and his family.

In the pulpit he is allowed to show heat, to shout and shake his fist; and how is the congregation to know that the soaring fireworks of his indignation were lit by the commonest of mundane frictions? One sometimes hears a sermon that is little else than a full-blooded brawl between the preacher and an imaginary opponent. One wonders how a man can get so angry with an adversary who neither hits nor answers back and who is not even there, until it is recognized that the preacher is now getting even with a late occasion when he fumed in compelled silence. Of course, he is not conscious that his anger is seeking compensation in the pulpit for expression denied him else-

where; for as soon as he understands the transaction, the exchange ceases to relieve him. And he is the more easily blinded to the truth of the situation because the theme of his sermon may be closely related to the occasion of his anger. He may, for example, be annoyed because someone has refused aid to one of his schemes, and the point of the annoyance may be that the wisdom of his suggestion has been doubted. This personal pique may be the effective motive behind a passionate pulpit enforcement of the text, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." Annoyance with people who do not come to hear him may be behind the vehemence with which he rebukes the sins of those who do. But the connection need not be so close: no matter what the cause of his anger, if an angry man sits down to make a sermon or stands up to preach one, his anger will colour his utterance. And it is the more likely to do this because other exits are closed to it.

Some ministers have an alternative in their wives, who act as shock-absorbers. The patient loyalty of these women is astonishing. It is probably partly due to the not uncommon feminine admiration for the cave man. Partly it may be her perception that when her hus-

band, choking with otherwise necessarily suppressed wrath, vents it upon her, he is really paying her a notable tribute, for he does it because he knows he is not baiting a hornet and that there will be no blabbing. She probably also feels this side of the difficulties of his position—of which she is proud—and therefore, whether her husband vents upon her his congested anger or her baby his overloaded stomach, she takes all in the same motherly patience.

Some ministers are denied this second outlet of temper, for their wives, in this matter at least, act on the maxim that it is better to give than to receive, and women have peculiar gifts in the expression of wrath. And whether an unrebuking patience is as good for the angry husband as for the sick baby is more than questionable. For the two outstanding features of anger are that the angry are more forceful and more reckless than usual. Biologically, anger is the instinct that mobilizes the animal's powers for fight, and therefore temporarily obliterates all considerations that come between it and the destruction of its enemy. In the brute with its greater wholeheartedness this involves chiefly the suppression of fear: in the man (who is often both angry and afraid) it shows itself rather in the obliteration of all

sense of anything good in the object of his wrath. Anger, therefore, more than all other passions is likely to be unfair in its judgments and to seal them by prompt and drastic action; and when action is denied, to find in words still more unfair expression. It follows that when anger cannot vent itself upon its original occasion and finds outlet elsewhere, it is sure to do so in unfairness to the substitute; for then anger, being already in possession, prejudices the judgment and gives cruel execution to its sentences. In the original occasion it is different: there anger may have been justified and it may have been nothing but cowardice that suppressed its promptings. For then the man started cool and his wrath may well have been a perfectly right reply to what he saw or heard.

It must always be remembered that anger is not wrong because it is easily aroused but because it is wrongly directed. Anger is the spirit of opposition and destruction, and there are things that ought to be opposed and destroyed. The man who is incapable of anger can never be a great saint, because he will live on too easy terms with his own meannesses, and his attack upon the world's evil will lack high explosives.

Of the many tendencies that contribute to

anger, undoubtedly the commonest and strongest are our self-love and pride. We are most easily made angry by that which slights us. We tell ourselves that it is the injustice of the word or deed that angers us, though a similar injustice done to others hardly ruffles our placidity. It is this close alliance of anger and self-feeling that makes it possible for us to be satisfied with a substituted object. For when we boil with wrath at having to submit to the indignity of listening without reply to that which wounds our pride, we are apt to seek compensation by putting someone else (congregation or wife or child) in the same position. Having been trodden on, we mollify our bruises by treading on someone else. Whereas, if the real cause of our anger had been injustice, should we not above all things hate the injustice which our anger inflicts upon others? The man who loves justice will, when he is angry, be careful of his speech to those who cause his anger, but he will impose upon himself the most sacred obligation to say and do nothing to others until he has mastered the remainder of his wrath.

Being myself somewhat deficient in anger, I cannot tell from any great experience the best ways of avoiding it or quieting the after-trem-

ors of an angry encounter. But three means are commendable. Anger, the physiologist tells us, sugars our blood in preparation for exertion, and therefore exertion is a good outlet for useless anger. Bodily exertion is probably best, as in the commonly cited instance of the wise man who kept logs wherewith to saw away his tantrums. It is better, if a man, when he finds himself angry beyond his judgment, would remember Orlando's resolve, "I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults." Better still if he can learn to laugh at himself when his anger is not holy;

> For often a man's own angry pride
> Is cap and bells for a fool;

and why should not he enjoy the show he provides and convert a danger of injustice into a fellowship of laughter?

DEPRESSION

MANY ministers are subject to frequent and severe fits of depression. Men of all occupations may be found to suffer in this way, especially those whose work, like the minister's, is of the sort that makes heavy demands upon their nervous energy. But although it may seem that a minister's vocation ought to bring with it considerations that would enable him to resist any native or circumstantial tendency to depression, the fact is that he is probably more liable to it than others.

The immediate occasion is generally the lack of apparent result to his labours. Despite his best endeavours he may find that years of labour yield no evidence of any sort of success in his church. His preaching may meet with little response except criticism or objection. He may see the members of the church factious, frivolous, indifferent. His congregations may dwindle, and this most easily happens in just those churches in which financial straits come hard upon the heels of lessening members.

What some ministers have to suffer in these respects is pitiable. With others, the occasion of depression is not any externally measurable failure but comparison of what is with what they think might be. To see results continually and, it may be, strikingly short of our hope is depressing. And the minister is more likely than other men to find occasions of this sort, for he is compelled by the nature of his work to hope for and expect great results.

The reaction of the situation upon him is likely to be complex. He will probably suffer as most solo workers suffer when their efforts are not followed by the appreciation they expect; so that there is likely to be a considerable element of wounded vanity in his depression. It is common for the preacher after preaching to be assailed by an influx either of conceit or depression, an evidence of their relationship. But it is difficult for him to discover and overcome whatever of vanity there is in his depression, because there will also be a question as to whether his work is not unsuccessful through his unfaithfulness. The presence of this second factor in undistinguished combination with the first will wound his self-regard still more sorely and in the name of humility and honesty will

keep him from escaping the pains of wounded vanity.

The best method, therefore, with this depression is to distinguish its constituents and to attack them in detail. The element of wounded vanity is nearly always to be discerned, generally in large quantity. To see this is to be half cured of it, for vanity, when stripped, is laughable, and nothing kills it sooner than to know that it is ridiculous. For the rest, let a minister think what place a demand for the gratification of vanity can have in the service of One who said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." And having got so far, he will be at advantage in dealing with the rest of his problem.

He will recognize that he is in part to blame for the ill success of his work: indeed, in dealing with his vanity he has convicted himself; but he has at the same time removed what was blinding him to the real nature of his depression and thus securing its continuance. It is right to be humble and sorry over our faults, but not depressed, for depression of this sort has its root either in pride or unfaith. To remain in depression over a sense of personal shortcoming is to confess that one has no Gospel for the sinner.

But a minister should here take into account that visible results, such as the size and appreciation of his congregations, are not a trustworthy index of his faithfulness. A church may decline in numbers for no other reason than that part of its former congregation has moved farther out of town. A preacher's lack of success may be due to dullness, unwisdom or moral slackness, but it may also be due to faithfulness in things unpopular. The preacher of smooth things is always more popular than the preacher of truth. The preaching of Jesus was at first very popular, but later, when men saw where it was leading, He was left to die alone.

And it should be remembered that the unpleasantness of being depressed does not save it from being disloyalty to God. No minister has any right to forego a sense of joy and glory at being permitted to labour in the things of Christ. He has no right to look depreciatingly upon any honest preaching of Jesus, even if it is his own. To have helped but one soul to a better understanding and more faithful following of Jesus Christ and to have still the possibility of helping others, is to have a career the greatness of whose past glory yields only to the greatness to come.

POLITICS IN THE PULPIT

Should Christian preaching include pronouncements upon politics? Answers conflict. A certain section of eager Christians maintain that the Church should lead the politics of the country. Another section probably very much larger but not always moved by such honourable motives would banish politics from the pulpit. The preacher sometimes reproaches himself that it is cowardice rather than wisdom that keeps him silent on this topic, and yet at the same time he feels a certain unfitness in its introduction and is aware that generally, if not always, it inhibits the humility and spiritual receptiveness of worship.

Certain aspects of politics, of course, are universally recognized as having their place in Christian preaching. A preacher ought to urge upon his hearers the duties of citizenship and the obligation of the vote. He ought to keep them sensitive to the hardships and injustices of the world, many of which probably might be rectified or lessened by legislation. But by

"politics in the pulpit" is usually meant the advocacy of some particular party, some particular piece of legislation, some particular political theory as to how acknowledged evils may be remedied. It is these things that most people regard as outside the pulpit's true province, while others demand them with the taunt of cowardice.

The position seems simple enough. Certain evils exist, and the preacher believes he sees the way to remedy them. Why should he not preach it? It may be maintained that the pulpit is not the place for all the preacher's convictions, since he might, for example, be a homœopath. But in this case the difference is purely one of scientific judgment, whereas politics concern conduct, which always has a moral aspect. It is precisely in connection with this moral element that the difficulty arises, and that from two distinct but connected factors.

Practically all political activity has legislation or foreign policy as its object. The essence of legislation is that conformity with its enactments is not left to the volition of the citizen, but is secured by attaching penalties to disobedience. To preach politics, therefore, is not to exhort people to give themselves willingly to certain desirable acts or abstinences: it is to

persuade them to compel both themselves and others to conform to these lines of conduct. It amounts to the proposition, Here is a good thing to do, but I do not ask you to lead the world in doing it: I only ask you to consent to do it yourselves, providing all others are compelled to do likewise. This is called the Church leading in politics: it is not leading: it is refusing to move until all are compelled to move. Because of the element of coercion in all legislation, the pulpit admonition as to how to cast a vote in municipal or national politics is generally an act of unfaith in the power of truth to persuade and of the Spirit to lead. It is a short cut to an unchristian paradise. These considerations are not negated by the fact that certain great and widespread evils seem incapable of thorough eradication except by legislation. For the desired legislation will probably come all the sooner if preachers confine themselves to keeping the consciences and sympathies of their hearers alive on the matter and to urging them to do whatever they are now free to do in the desired direction without waiting for the compulsion of the rest. Legislation follows the moral growth of the community, and if the Church, one of the chief factors in that growth, makes legislation its

objective, the right order of development is reversed.

This brings us to the second factor, which itself has two aspects. On all living political issues there is divergence of opinion, and good and intelligent men will be found on both sides. The preacher cannot without uncharity and untruth assume that goodness and wisdom are on the one side only. He can in decency only state the reasons for his conclusions and commend them as those to which his best endeavour has brought him. But if good and intelligent men can come to other conclusions, his congregation are not put in the best position for forming a judgment until they have heard the other side. It may be answered that such considerations would cut out all debatable religious questions from the pulpit. But there the case is rather different. For with regard to the most important questions of religion a minister's position nearly always indicates roughly where he stands, and those whose worship he assists use him because roughly their conclusions are like his or because they are confident in the general direction of his leading. And a minister is specially trained that he may be able to help people to a solution of religious questions.

The second consideration in this connection

arises from the experience that it is worse than useless to legislate far ahead of public opinion. The best legislation is that the morality of which is above the moral level of the population but not too far above to be secured by the superior solidity and energy which those above the moral average will have over those below it. This means that practical legislation cannot be very far from the achieved moral level of the community and will therefore be a long way below the Christian moral ideal. So that the Christian preacher must remember that if he advocates any practical politics from the pulpit, he is likely either to compromise the Christian ideal by masking the difference between its moral level and that of the measure proposed or to reduce his advocacy to the faint praise that will have its usual result. Similar considerations apply to all pulpit criticisms of governmental action: it can be fairly judged only from a standpoint somewhere near the moral level of the community as a whole; and if the preacher takes this standpoint he abandons that to which the Christian pulpit is committed. Of course, he can make the position on this point clear, but the clearer he makes it the more incongruous it will appear.

A peculiar phase of this whole question ap-

pears in the attraction which socialism has for many Christian ministers, inclining them to think that to preach socialism is to advocate practical Christianity. The attraction has two aspects. Socialism claims to have the only sure remedy for certain acknowledged and great evils, and it is maintained that the socialist ideal approximates to the Christian ideal of society. It is not necessary here to discuss the merits of these two propositions: it is at least probable that both of them have an element of truth that must be reckoned with. But it must here be remembered that the point already referred to reappears. All socialist political activity involves legislation, and all legislation involves coercion. Now, though a more even distribution of wealth may be part of both the socialist and Christian ideal of society, the achievement or maintenance of such a condition by legislative coercion, which is the practical programme of political socialism, is essentially foreign to the means and ends of the Church of Christ. The more even distribution of wealth by legislation has much the same relation to the Christian willingness to share as enforced religious uniformity has to the ideal of "the unity of the faith." This essential difference must be taken into account if we would

understand the animosity to Christianity which is found in many socialistic and communistic circles, especially on the Continent, and which, though partly due to clerical opposition or indifference to social reform, is also partly due to the recognition that Christianity, so far as it is a force at all, is a rival enthusiasm with other ends and means.

To say these things is not to deny the value of socialistic legislation, but to point out that socialism is as foreign to the right use of the pulpit as any other politics.

MONEY

MINISTERS of religion are not generally money-lovers. The big majority of those whom I know could make very much more in some other occupation. The minority of whom this could not be said are those who as ministers are not successful either in appearance or in reality. But the minister is likely to feel the desirability of money quite as much as others, if not more. His is the worst paid of all professions: he will probably have a small stipend, and unless he is one of the few who have sufficient, he will seldom be offered a fee for any lectures or week-night sermons which he may be asked to give at other churches and societies than his own. Yet he must buy books: his interests and the need for certain human contacts will make him want to spend money on travelling and entertaining; he is frequently asked to give to charities, and he finds many who need assistance for which other funds than his own are not available.

These things probably account for the other-

wise strange fact that despite what Jesus said about riches, and despite the minister's own renunciation of all hope of them (unless he marries a rich wife), there are no churches or church assemblies of my knowledge in which wealth does not bring a man respect and favour. Of course, this might be generally justified on the ground that it is uncharitable to deny that a man is good merely because he is rich, and the only alternative is to conclude that he has stormed the needle's eye and is therefore really spiritually noteworthy. This is probably true in more cases than a cynical public is likely to concede, but unfortunately it does not account for all. There are other reasons.

In proportion to the extent of the monetary sacrifice which a minister's calling involves, it is evident that if it were not for the rich men of the church the small stipend would be smaller still. And the rich man, because of his riches, is generally influential with others in the church. So that the minister's temptation is to love not wealth but the wealthy: he becomes peculiarly susceptible to plutonic love: he is apt unconsciously to revert to the Old Testament idea that worldly success is the testimonial of providence. And this is all the easier since the

rich men of a church often give with the liberality and timeliness of providence's private secretaries. Some of them are so generous to their minister as to make it very difficult for him to steer between rapacity and ungraciousness. And the social amenities which a rich man can provide are very attractive to certain minds not uncommon in the ministry.

Hence it comes that the highest ecclesiastical positions which a layman can occupy are very very seldom occupied by any but wealthy men. A secretary may be able to say, "Silver and gold have I none," but mere spiritual riches will hardly ever open the layman's way to a presidency.

There is a minor but practically important part of this subject that must not be neglected. Not long ago, in a provincial city, I heard a celebrated preacher during his sermon inveigh against the unchristian practices of business. He came from a London church which pays its minister a quite sufficient stipend. He was spending a holiday which his church had given him on full pay that he might return the fitter for its work. And he would return not so refreshed as he might have been, because he had preached on most if not all the Sundays of his

holiday. Over against his church's loss he himself received a handsome remuneration for his holiday sermons.

As I listened I could not help thinking that although the preacher's strictures upon the unchristian elements of business were no doubt well taken, it was more than probable that a business man might retort with advantage. Supposing that a highly salaried man employed in important and exacting business was given a holiday on full pay in order that he might keep fit for his work and that he spent part of the time in earning more money for himself to the detriment of his holiday, one wonders what term his employers would apply to the transaction. Is it honest either in the minister who does it or in the church that asks him to do it? It may be said that his own church knows that he does it. That may be so, but they do not like it, and if they are blind to the element of dishonesty in it, that only says more for the charity of their sentiments than for the clarity of their moral discernment.

There are, of course, many poorly paid ministers who, were it not for the fees they get for holiday preaching, could not afford a holiday at all. It would make matters better for them if those to whom it was not a financial neces-

sity would desist from a practice which when not necessary seems hardly honest.

But ought not a minister of the Gospel to take every opportunity to preach? Not if a holiday is necessary for the efficiency of his work. But that is not quite the point. There are cases in which every minister is more than justified in preaching on a holiday, even though he will lose some of the physical benefit of his holiday by so doing. But this does not apply to cases where he would not preach if there were no fee. The essential fee makes the difference. For without it, even though he returns to his work so much the less refreshed, he is making on behalf of his church their contribution to the larger whole of which they are part. The demand, explicit or implied, for a fee transforms a corporate generosity into a private gain of very dubious rectitude. It may be said generally that when a church pays its minister a decent stipend, he has no right either to make money by holiday engagements or otherwise to exhaust his time and energies in earning fees for lecturing and preaching.

PLAGIARISM

One of the world's most original men told us no man's work had more than a very little originality in it. In every sermon the preacher of necessity makes such large use of the erudition and invention of others that it would be quite impossible for him to make anything like an exact acknowledgment of his indebtedness. Nor is it any blemish to his honesty that he does not do so. Those of his hearers who are informed and intelligent enough to be considered in this respect know that very little originality is possible in any sermon and that it is impossible for the preacher to recognize the origin of more than a small fraction of his borrowings.

On the other hand, honesty sometimes demands that the preacher should not use another's matter without acknowledgment. It is not easy to say just where the line should be drawn, but it may be said that the origin of those things should be acknowledged which, if unacknowledged, would bring the preacher the

credit of originality. So far as this concerns thought (as apart from expression), acknowledgment is obligatory in general only when a new thought is very new. Thoughts speedily become common property, and the right to use a thought at all lies in our having in a certain very real way made it our own. In very few congregations is there even one hearer sufficiently acquainted with current theology to recognize what is original in a preacher's thought, but there will be not a few who know whether or not he has a thorough understanding of the thought he uses.

In the matter of expression it is somewhat different, and this touches not words only but figures of speech. In the case of short, direct citations, inverted commas are capable of vocal representation. Some citations announce themselves as such by their very form. But unless they are well known or their borrowed nature very obvious, it is generally well to give the author, otherwise the hearers may miss the next few sentences while they wonder whether it is the preacher's own or whence he had it. The commonest form of dishonesty here is the appropriation of another man's wit. Both Burke and Fox, for instance, are credited with the saying that Lord Thurlow looked wiser than

any man ever was. A few years ago at a public meeting I heard one well-known minister say of another that he looked holier than any man could be. This was apparently given as his own and received with applause. I think the appropriation hardly honest, but it is possible that the speaker may have assumed that his audience knew that the saying was not original.

It is by no means always dishonest to use borrowed illustrations without acknowledgment. The dishonesty occurs here when the witty application of an illustration is borrowed with it and neither is acknowledged. No speaker need worry to discover the name of the first person who compared life to a river or a road. But I was told not long ago of an evangelist who had said that he did not dislike the publican himself, but that what he objected to in him was what he objected to in the flea—the way he made his living (a witticism whose origin I had previously found), and this was instanced as evidence of his wit, so that he had apparently given it as his own. If this was a true report, one can only marvel at the spirit of a man who was willing to gain an ignorant crowd's applause for his cleverness at the risk of showing his real quality to the few who knew.

The most extreme and despicable form of this dishonesty is a preacher's appropriation without acknowledgment of the whole of the sermon of another. Occasionally this is done, nor is the malpractice confined to the obscure. The thread of the discourse and even the very words are reproduced with little alteration; and these are the things which every congregation takes for granted to be the minister's own. I would rather that a minister was caught picking a pocket. It would show less unfitness for his calling. To steal under stress of want is not so depraved as to steal for self-glory where a man has undertaken to glorify God and serve the truth.

WOMEN

A STUDENT of whom I have been told put upon his mantelshelf the photograph of a minister and his wife, and on answering his landlady that they were his brother and sister-in-law, received the meditation, "I'm glad I'm not a minister's wife. I shouldn't like to share my old man with forty other women." She was evidently alive to a side of the minister's life which is often so neglected in his thought that it causes trouble, sometimes serious trouble, in his life. For a peculiarity of the sex emotions is that they are liable to go unrecognized until they attain an almost compulsive strength. So that, on the one hand, their milder and in themselves quite innocent forms may, because their nature is not recognized, give rise to affectation or confusion of manner, while, on the other hand, a man may find himself in a life-and-death struggle with a passion which, had it been recognized in its infancy, could easily have been tamed. A well-known and happily married minister said in my hearing that there were sev-

eral women in his congregation with whom it would be very easy for him to fall in love, and that he considered the open-eyed recognition of this possibility the best safeguard against its realization. It is undoubtedly true that if the thing is recognized for what it is in its early stages, it finds ranged against it certain massive sentiments which, in its more powerful development, lose their power or even side with it. This is particularly likely to happen with the self-regarding sentiments. If he becomes aware of what is happening in its early stages, the man sees clearly and feels strongly the damage that a scandal will do to his reputation, and self-love will range itself against sex-love. But when a man with a considerable estimate of his own importance falls deeply in love, he is apt to despise as an affront to his dignity all that comes between him and his desire. I have known two ministers who have gone off with women that were not their wives, and I have observed that they were not apparently more inflammable than others, but that they were men whose native self-importance had been much increased by the deference and adulation that are lavished upon the popular preacher. A factor of opposite quality may also be evoked. If a man becomes aware in its early

stages that he has fallen in love with a woman he cannot marry, he will see clearly and surely that he is in danger of ruining her happiness: if he is blind to it until her affections are engaged, he may easily tell himself that everything must be sacrificed to the union upon which her happiness now seems to depend.

I believe it is generally true that sexual purity and honesty do not depend upon the weakness of the instinct; and let no man, minister or other, be fool enough to think himself above temptation. They depend rather upon a clear vision and adequate appreciation of the values and interests of life, to which this instinct may be either a powerful contributor or

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame.

A minister has more to do with women than most men have. He has not only to bear in mind the seventh commandment, but especially to recognize that this commandment has to be obeyed both in letter and in spirit, despite the fact that it is impossible for any man to deal in any way with any woman precisely, both in feeling and in act, as he would deal with another man. Nor does the advice to treat the older women as mothers and the younger as sisters meet the difficulty. A man may be tol-

erably successful with the former, though he had better not let any woman under sixty-five suspect his method. To treat the younger women as sisters was probably, so far as the form of conduct was concerned, an excellent suggestion in apostolic days, but, if so, brothers and sisters must have behaved to one another then in other ways than they do now. And with regard to feeling, the suggestion may be an ideal, though that is questionable, for it is not often good to try to regard people as being what we know they are not; but to think that by an effort of will, even under apostolic or sub-apostolic authority, any man can look upon and feel towards women who are not his sisters as though they were, is to misunderstand human nature as absurdly as the Chinese doctor who will sell you pills warranted to convert a girl into a boy.

In every contact between man and woman there is some awakening of the sex emotion, be it only that of repulsion; and it is best for all concerned that this should be recognized. Not only is it highly undesirable, but it is quite impossible to inhibit the whole of such emotional response; and it is clear that so long as we shut our eyes to it we cannot draw the line between the good and evil of it, and not to appreciate

the good of it leaves us the weaker to resist its evil possibilities. Purity itself depends very largely upon certain elements of the sex emotion. Reverence for womanhood is the best safeguard of purity, and a great part of this reverence is a man's appreciation of certain secondary sex characteristics. The great advantage to the child of permanent unions between the parents urged nature through many centuries to develop those secondary sex characteristics that make for this permanence. These characteristics consist very largely of the sort of intelligence and sensibility, of the capacity for mutual understanding and sympathy and co-operation, that use the occasion of a transitory and physical passion for the formation of a fellowship of personalities which is permanent chiefly in virtue of its spiritual qualities. In these days when the triumphant psychologist wreathes his brows with confiscated fig-leaves, it is well to remember that nearly all of the tremendous emotional stir of being in love—the stir upon which sex depends for its importance in human psychology—is a limitation and not a by-product of appetite. Lust as a physical appetite is promiscuous: love as a sex emotion is personal and individual, with a strong emphasis upon personal values and therefore

with great possibilities of spiritual development. The importance of sex in psychology depends directly upon the fact that in humanity sex has got far beyond mere physical appetite and has developed the personal and spiritual side of sex comradeship into one of the most valuable and wonderful of human achievements. And it is because sexual sin damages and dishonours this achievement that it is treachery to human nature.

This development has been by means of adding to the physical difference of sex certain intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual differences which make the companionship of man and woman mutually desirable. But the exercise of this mental and emotional sex difference and its attractiveness to those of the opposite sex is not confined to the marriage relationship, and it would be an immeasurable loss if it were. Nor is it any disloyalty to marriage that this should be so. No man can be a citizen of two countries, and every citizen owes to his country a certain unique obligation; but he is not a citizen to be proud of, or one likely to be of much good to his country, who does not see and honour and enjoy the charms and achievements of countries not his own.

Without the mental and emotional differ-

ences of sex, the fellowship of the Church would be far poorer and less vital. It is to be noted that the contact of Jesus with women had characteristic qualities and results not found in His other intercourse. A minister's work brings him into fellowship of a peculiar sort with both men and women, and it is natural and right that he should not feel the same about both, and that so far as either fellowship gives him pleasure it should be pleasure of a different sort. The minister who professes that he cannot "be bothered" with women is probably a liar; but he may be an Angelo; and he should note that even Shakespeare could find nothing interesting in a misogynist. The minister who commends his virility to you by half-contemptuous reference to the women of his church will generally be found to depend upon them for four-fifths of his congregation, which may partially justify his contempt. No man, minister or other, need be ashamed to confess that he enjoys the society of women and finds something there of value to himself which he does not find in the society of his fellow-men. A frank recognition of this would make him their grateful debtor and collaborator, and save him from having to consider himself as their patron or from attempting to treat them as if he were

an aunt trying to cajole a lot of spoilt children whom she would like to, but may not, spank.

Under the head of this chapter a special matter has to be mentioned. In every church there are women whose love has not prospered and whose emotional life has therefore not found its normal object and expression. These women are very likely, quite unconsciously, to allow their admiration and affection for their minister to be coloured by an emotional quality proper to a more romantic relationship. Within certain limits, this is wholesome; and even where they are conscious of it, there is no need for them to think that it compromises their dignity. On the other hand, it may degenerate into a weak, ridiculous, dangerous sentimentality; and the course of its development depends largely, though not entirely, upon what the minister makes of it.

He may quite possibly be conscious of it without discerning its cause, in which case it will probably fill him with quite unwarranted conceit or equally unnecessary fear. If the former, he should remember that in the case under question it is his office alone that occasions such a thing and permits it to show itself, and that, in any case, a man has no cause to think much of himself because a woman falls half or wholly

in love with him. The qualities which a woman finds attractive in a man are various: it may be more than ordinary approximation to the male gorilla; or it may be that he seems like a sickly and ugly baby that needs mothering; and quite generally regular features (which Borrow assures us to be the sign of a fool) are more attractive to women than any qualities of mind. Of course, I am here speaking of the instincts, not of the judgment of women: most women are far too wise to want to marry every man with whom they feel inclined to fall in love. The minister should also remember that this sentiment makes him its object, not because he is more attractive than other men, but because he is closely connected with so much that is adorable and demands affection and loyalty and service, and also because he is in an especial way a minister of the God who is the husband of all widowed souls. And this consideration suggests that for a disappointed woman to fall slightly in love with her minister may be a factor in the process of wholesome and happy sublimation of instincts that might otherwise yield nothing but inward conflict and exhaustion.

The minister therefore who despises or inwardly ridicules such affection is even further from wisdom and decency than he who takes

the occasion to indulge the upper registers of his sex in flirtation or the profundity of his conceit in appropriating to himself what belongs to his vocation. So far as it is personal—and of course to a certain extent it is so—a minister had best recognize that if it is not attached to qualities which he cannot help having and of which he has generally no reason to be proud, it will have that idealizing quality that is so characteristic of romantic affection. The recognition of the latter will make him a humbler and more hopeful man, and will teach him to find the prophecies of God in a sort of affection which he may otherwise misunderstand and misuse, to his own and others' shame and loss.

A colleague here reminds me that a minister has a special duty in respect of the spiritual life of his wife. Other women can change their ministers, but not she. She is bound for life to the religious ministrations of one man, and with him she has to do in conditions and circumstances in which whatever is undisciplined and insincere will inevitably show itself. His business will be so to live in the home that it will not deaden her spiritual life to hear her husband preach and to live with her minister. He must remember that her love and loyalty will affect her judgment of the discrepancies

between the minister and the husband, and that it will be of great damage to both of these if he allows his conscience to be as lenient as his wife. His task here is not inhumanly hard: it needs only that the fundamental endeavour of his everyday life shall be that which finds expression in the pulpit. And it is heartening to observe that comparatively few ministers' wives are disillusioned women.

SCRIBES, PHARISEES, ETC.

EVERY minister should study well what Jesus said about the religious authorities of His day, for he will find there the sins against which he has most need to be watchful. This concerns him not merely as one whose profession is religious, as was that of priest and scribe and lawyer, but as one who, apart from considerations of profession or livelihood, undertakes to live for duty and religion, as was the case with the Pharisee; and if it is any comfort to the minister, he may remember that the Pharisee was usually a layman.

It is silly to think that because Jesus said such hard things about the scribes and Pharisees, therefore a Christian minister is not in any danger of falling into their sins. These men were serious, highly respected people. They were not thought hypocrites before Jesus called them so. The evils He saw in them were precisely the sort against which He found it especially important to warn His own disciples. They are evils symptomatic of a sober and pious

life that is beginning to be more than content with less than the highest. They are the continual danger of all people consciously devoted to duty and religion, and especially of all except the most worthless of ministers. If a minister finds that "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees!" is irrelevant to his case, it is because he is below their level, not above it. If any man doubt this, let him consider the Pharisee's prayer, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as the rest of men," and let him ask himself whether that does not express his own feeling about himself.

We do not sound a trumpet before our almsgiving (we are sometimes ashamed to show how little we give), and we do not stand and pray at the corner of the street (partly because we have not the courage); but let every minister think twice before he denies that in conduct or worship he is ever influenced by the desire to be seen of men. He will probably defend himself by contending that when this happens it is because he desires to set an example. I have no doubt that this rejoinder was made to Jesus. And I do not remember any saying of Jesus that bids us admit as a motive the desire to set an example. It is true that in the Fourth Gos-

pel (xiii. 15) He is once recorded to have spoken of one of His acts as an example, but His earlier words to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me," show that the original motive and significance of the act was other and deeper. The life and teaching of Jesus confirm the judgment of experience that, as already noted, nothing is worth doing as an example that is not better worth doing for its own sake, and that an act is more powerful as an example when the onlookers have reason to believe that it was not done for that purpose. It is the men who are most seriously concerned with religion and righteousness that most need this warning of Jesus. For the highest motives are not easy to maintain, and as soon as they slacken, the actions proper to them begin to be done from lower motives, commonest of which is the desire that our righteousness should be seen of men. The reiteration of the warning in the first half of the sixth chapter of Matthew suggests that Jesus knew that this was the peculiar temptation of His disciples.

The minister does not "desire to walk in long robes," but he may be proud of the cloth and may desire gowns and hoods and bands and bishops' lawn and moderators' lace. He does

not desire to be called "Rabbi," but he dearly loves to have D.D. after his name. If he enjoys the deference commonly accorded to his position, what is it but to desire "salutations in the market-places," and how do "the chief seats in the synagogues and the chief places at feasts" differ from the limelight which nowadays outbids the halo? Prayers made for a pretence, whether they be long or short, did not die with the scribes: what minister has not shaped a public prayer with a view to the credit of him who prays? Ministers do not now "disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast," but quite a number of them seem careful of the expression they wear in public: at least, one supposes that they could not look as they do if they were natural about it. Some seem to cultivate an appearance of serious preoccupation, which is the modern way of being "of a sad countenance." Some adopt an intellectual pose in their photographs, book on knee and finger on cheek, that they may appear unto men to think.

Jesus said of the Pharisees, "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger." It is not

known that the Pharisees demanded of others the fulfilment of any precept which they did not themselves acknowledge. But it is known that their interpretations of the law were exceedingly difficult of fulfilment for the man who had his living to earn in common ways. And one wonders whether the Christian minister does not sometimes act similarly towards the business man, for he may be heard applying Christianity to business in a way that is quite easy for himself, in his own very limited business transactions, to observe, but exceedingly difficult for the business man.

Jesus' blame of those who cleanse the outside of the cup and allow uncleanness within, who were like tombs that masked their power to defile, touches a common reaction to the sort of position in which a minister finds himself. He is apt to adopt towards his congregation the sort of solemn fiction of impeccability which parents adopt towards their children. He and the parents know that the effect of their words depends largely upon what their hearers think of their acts; and in both situations it is very much easier to appear good than to be so. Hence it is not uncommon for a minister to be more seriously concerned about appearing

blameless and exemplary than about overcoming the much evil which, however good he may be, still remains in him. How many ministers feel as concerned when they have given way to temper or greed or vanity as when they think they have been observed in these faults by their congregations? Thus the minister's fellowship with his congregation and with his own soul may become tainted with untruth.

The scribal and Pharisaic ideas of Sabbath-keeping and of Corban, of the importance of tithing mint and cummin, their facility in swallowing the camel and their fastidiousness over the gnat, all illustrate a very common misdirection of the religious mind. Some people conclude that religion is the most important concern of life, and in this they may be regarded as right. But they are liable to proceed to the further conclusion that anything that concerns religion is of more importance than any other concern. Or if they do not go quite as far as this, their judgment as to the comparative values of life is heavily weighted in favour of everything directly associated with their cult and creed; whereas the supreme value of religion is in its power to include and order, to purify and dignify, all the other values of life.

In the central and vital things of religion this can hardly be forgotten, for they concern life too deeply and directly. But it may be said generally that those things that specially concern religion but are not absolutely essential to it should be put below the greater of life's common values. That seems the principle of Jesus' teaching of the Sabbath. Otherwise the very function of religion is defeated. It is as though, in view of the supreme value of order for the community, it was ordained that no policeman should be allowed to run any risk in protecting the property or person of the ordinary citizen. Yet instances of this perverted perspective are plentiful and perennial. A minister's success is commonly measured rather by the size of his congregations than by the lives they lead. Ministers themselves are apt, in the assessment of character, to give undue weight to regularity in church attendance and activity in church work, and are slow to recognize the spirit of Jesus when it does not work in close connection with institutional religion; and here it should be remembered that until the Church as an institution is perfect, one of the means of its improvement will be found in the goodness that grows outside its pale, for there, though in some respects at a disadvan-

tage, in other respects, just because of the imperfection of the church, the spirit of Jesus works more freely. It is significant that in all ecclesiastical assemblies sectarian concerns arouse more interest than those that are common to all churches; yet the latter are vital and the former are not.

In saying, "Ye build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them," Jesus marks how veneration for the dead prophet goes with persecution of the living one. The religions of all ages have shown this unholy concomitance. Few of the saints and prophets of Christendom have in any century or country been without opposition and persecution in the name of loyalty to the past; and the list begins with Paul, opposed and calumniated by his fellow-Christians in their zeal for Moses. It is so to-day. Most of us are more cordial to dead saints than to living ones, and more willing to listen to dead than to living prophets. This has two main reasons. One is reflected in the Greek exhortation, "Excel elsewhere." A greater and better man than we in the past does not make us look so small as one who excels us in the present. The cult of past and acknowledged greatness is a credit to the worshipper:

his appreciation shows his quality; but with present greatness all other conclusions are obliterated by the odious comparison. The honouring of the dead prophet and the belittling of the present one may thus both spring from the unconscious but direct and almost unmixed workings of self-regard. But this motive may play a part to the same end in another way, together with others of a different sort. The serious man will be very strongly attached to certain ways of thought and action, in his estimate of which he is supported by many likeminded, whom he will regard as the salt of the earth. He will hold to these ways with an enthusiasm generated by the belief that in so doing he is the partisan of light against darkness and of good against evil. Enthusiasm will be reinforced by habit. Thus his estimate of himself will be bound up with his assurance of the excellence of his creed and code. But the prophet is a critic of conventional notions and practices, and generally an innovator both in thought and conduct. He will tell the serious people of his day that their creeds are inadequate and their codes imperfect. And only a few of them will have elasticity and honesty and humility enough to weigh his words impartially. The rest will attack in mass formation, driven by so much of

piety as can ally itself with pride, and with their banners inscribed "The Faith of our Fathers." The situation is perennial: it is only the weapons that alter: the stake and halter give way to better-mannered and therefore more effective means of opposition. We are still resentful when we are told that we are wrong, and the longer and the more seriously we have given ourselves to the now condemned way, the greater is the condemning prophet's risk. The whole attitude and frame of mind in which scribe and Pharisee opposed Jesus is one to which by character, training and place the ministerial mind is strongly tempted and from which it can be saved only by maintaining the childlike receptivity demanded in the saying, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein"; for we must not think that the qualification for entrance is to be dropped in the vestibule.

We must therefore reckon that it is possible for the Christian minister to be amongst those who take away the key of knowledge, not entering in themselves, and hindering those who are entering in. For, as we have seen, the acknowledged teacher finds it harder than others to accept new teaching: the greater his

prestige the more firmly he will be committed to his proclaimed conclusions, the more difficult it will be for him to accept new truth, and the more powerful will be his influence in preventing its acceptance by others.

The accusation which Jesus in the parable of the wicked husbandmen brought against the chief priests and scribes and elders, of attempting to convert a divine trust into private property, was that of having yielded to one of the perpetual temptations of all religious authorities. I have never known a minister accused of simony, but I am sure it is not an obsolete sin. Simony is the application to other uses of money given for sacred purposes, and the minister may forget in his spending that his wage comes from money which its givers have dedicated to the service of God, and that for some of the givers it is a costly sacrifice. One wonders to what use the priest who ultimately got them could put the widow's two mites, if he had known their history.

But its application to money is only a very small part of this consideration. A minister is tempted to look upon his church as his in many ways that betray the ownership of his church's Lord. He comes easily to think of it as a place

for the exercise of his activities and the impression of his personality rather than as a place where God's children may be helped to the exercise and development of theirs. A testing time for him will be when he finds that his congregation does not agree with him as to what is best for them in public worship: will he honour their experience as he does his own? And a constant temptation of the preacher is to forget that the church was built to the glory of God and not to the glory of the preacher, or worse still, to grow unmindful of the difference between these two.

There is a common and cunning temptation to make private property of the truth. To congratulate ourselves upon possession of the truth almost always degenerates into glorying over those to whom our judgment denies it, and this is to filch the chief fruit of the Spirit. If we recognized the truth of God as a trust and not as a treasure-trove, this attitude of heart would be impossible. When we find that what we claim as the trust which we have from heaven bears a stamp not current with other of God's children, it should make us humbly apprehensive of mistake. And in so far as we are sure that we have the truth which others have not, we should find it a rebuke and a condemnation,

an evidence of badness both of heart and method, that God's children are ill fed while we glory in the solitary possession of the bread of life which He gave us to distribute.

The parable of the wicked husbandmen follows immediately upon the interview in which the chief priests and scribes and elders had asked Jesus whence He had His authority, and in which He compelled them unwillingly to confess themselves bound by their prominence to incapacity as spiritual judges. The price we pay for converting truth to private advantage of any sort is that we commit ourselves to refuse all truth except that which seems to our private advantage, so that our attachment to truth becomes accidental not vital, and even such truth as we hold we hold untruly.

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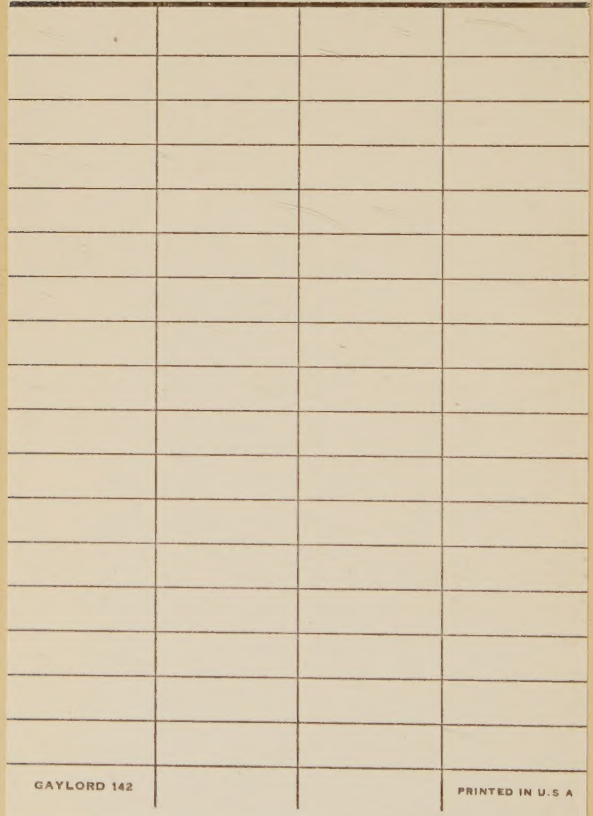

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